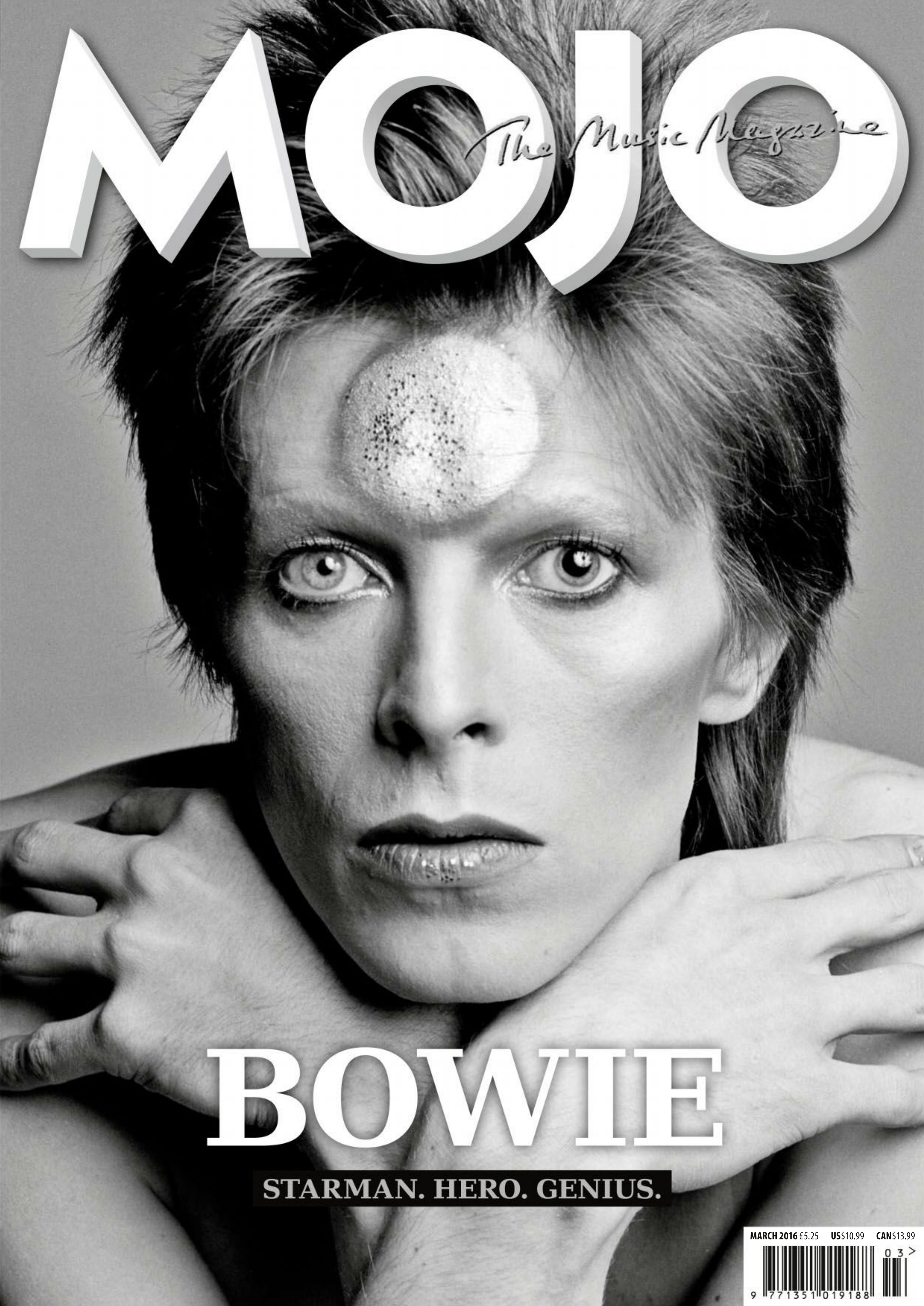
MOJO
The Music Magazine



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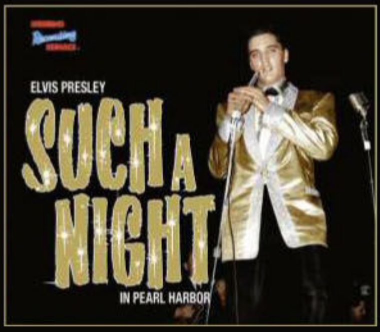

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"The first time you'd seen three beautiful black women on TV..."

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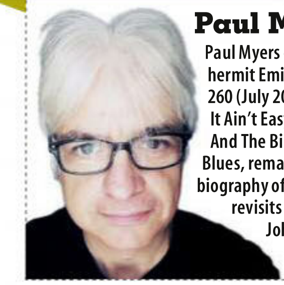


Paul Myers

Paul Myers caught up with pop hermit Emitt Rhodes for MOJO 260 (July 2015). His 2007 book, It Ain’t Easy: Long John Baldry And The Birth Of The British Blues, remains the definitive biography of the big man. Myers revisits the story of Long John in this issue, turn to page 46.

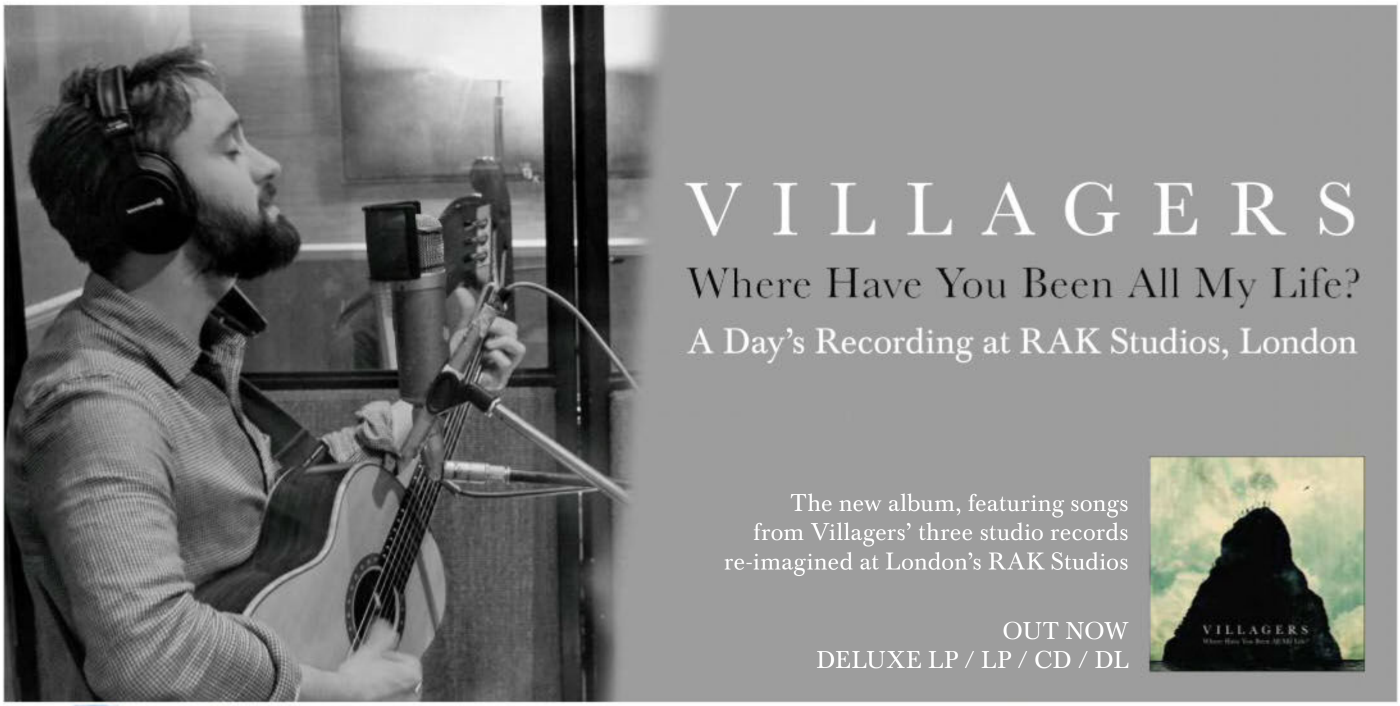
Guy Eppel

Guy Eppel is going through a floral phase of life. The shoot in Richmond, Virginia for this month’s Matthew E. White feature, which starts on page 42, lacked flowers but compensated for that by being steeped in history. “I also met a rabbit,” says Eppel.

Sylvie Simmons

Sylvie Simmons has been writing about rock since 1977 and interviewed Lemmy – whom she eulogises over eight pages in this issue (p52) – for the first time in 1980. Her books include I’m Your Man: The Life Of Leonard Cohen and Serge Gainsbourg: A Fistful Of Gitanes. She’s also a singer-songwriter; fans of her recent album, *Sylvie*, include Brian Wilson and Elvis Costello.

Tom Hines, Andy Cotterill



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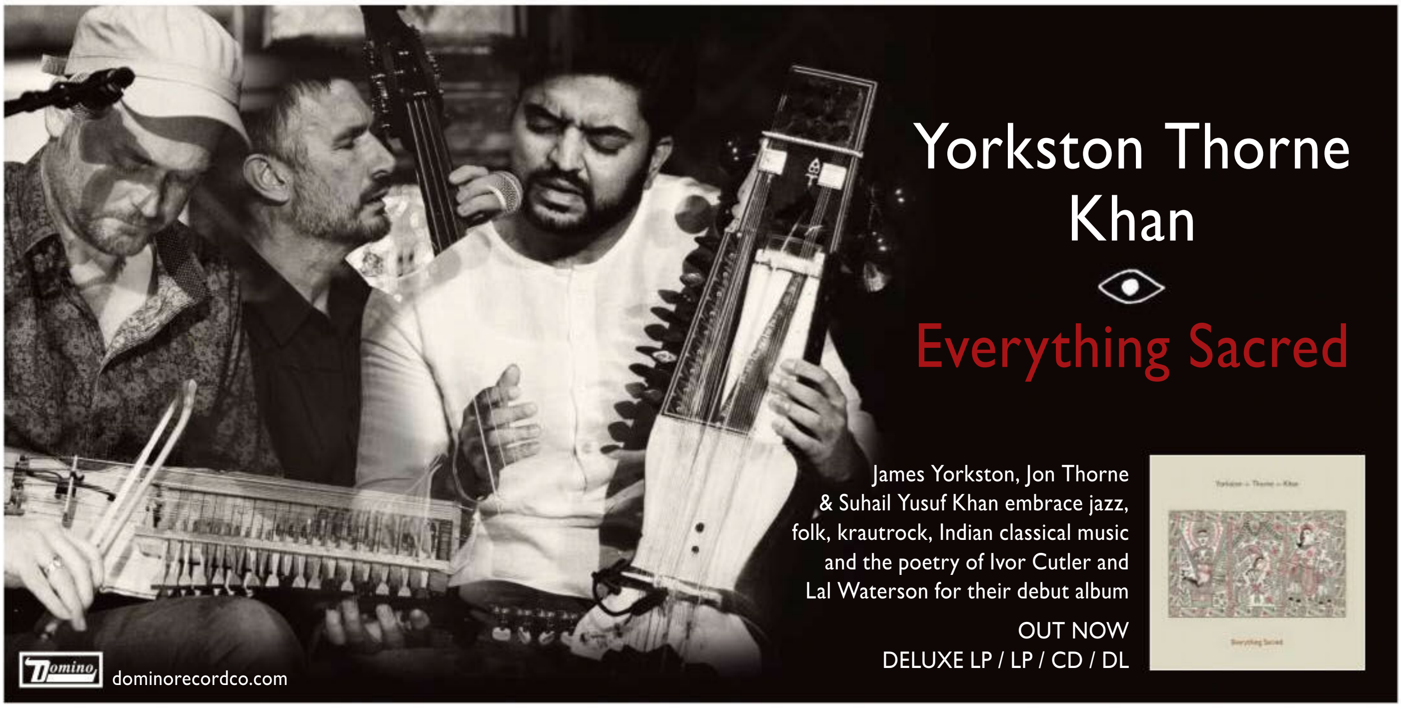

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ALL BACK TO MY PLACE

IN WHICH THE STARS REVEAL THE SONIC DELIGHTS GUARANTEED TO GET THEM GOING...

Tom Jones

STILL ATOMIC

What music are you currently grooving to?

I've been checking out **Sly & The Family Stone** again. It still sounds revolutionary.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

Jerry Lee Lewis's eponymous first album. I heard him and that was it. He was unbelievable. I knew he couldn't be the only white singer in the Southern states who'd been influenced by black music. I saw him live in Cardiff in 1962, with **Johnny Kidd & The Pirates**, he was amazing.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

Clyde McPhatter, Treasure Of Love, bought at Fred H Fey's in Pontypridd in 1956. I loved the sound of it.

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

Big Bill Broonzy, who was the first blues singer I was really aware of. I love Black, Brown And White. He was working in a slaughterhouse in Chicago and the white workers were getting paid twice as much as the black workers, and this was his way of doing something about it: "Me and a man was working side by side, this is what it meant, they were paying him a dollar an hour and they was paying me 50 cents." He had to record it in France, because it was too controversial to do it in America.

What do you sing in the shower?

All kinds of blues, country and gospel.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

Good Golly Miss Molly, **Little Richard**. It's tremendous. I thought he was a girl at first, covering **Billy Haley & The Comets**, but he did it first. The lyrics were more risqué!

And your Sunday morning record?

Bad Penny Blues by **Humphrey Lyttelton**. I loved trad jazz and this sounded great on the radio at the time, I'd just left school. I still love it now.

Eska

FOLK-SOUL MERCURY CONTENDER

What music are you currently grooving to?

I've been in a state of shuffle, with a lot of [Dalston-based] NTS radio. **Noura Mint Seymali** is basically a desert rock star, the most incredible powerhouse vocalist and performer, from Mauritania. Also **Joanna Newsom**, **Owiny Sigoma Band** and **Laura Groves**. And the whole modular synth world – **James Holden** and **Luke Abbott** – has been lighting me up.

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

Impossible to say. Depends on the time of day and dare I say, the time of the month. In a reflective mood, **Joni Mitchell**'s *Court And Spark*, or if I'm feeling jollier, *Magical Mystery Tour*. And to have my mind blown, *Kid A* or *Innervisions*. I can listen to them and just marvel.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

The first one I ever owned came with the first record player my dad bought me – *Song Of Joy* by **Captain & Tennille**. I wonder if Muskrat Love was the kindling of my psych-folk sensibilities.

Which musician, other than yourself, have you ever wanted to be?

I'm still striving to be that musician. But I'd enjoy being in the body of bass player **Robin Mullarkey**.

What do you sing in the shower?

I don't. But bathtimes are interesting, I have a one-year-old so there are a lot of nautical or water-based nursery rhymes.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

When you're a musician, every night is potentially that, but songs that would get me revved up are Give Me Back My Wig by **Hound Dog Taylor**, Roxette by **Dr. Feelgood** and Space Art by **Love Machine**.

And your Sunday morning record?

John Martyn's Small Hours, **Arthur Russell**'s Losing My Taste For The Night Life and Planet Caravan by **Black Sabbath** – that's the vibe. And there's a **Jackie Mittoo** song, After Christmas, that's very much a beautiful, slow burning late-rising sound.

Eska plays London Koko on March 31.

Jaroslav Moravec, BBC Picture Library

Jerry Lee Lewis
SPACE ART
3
HEAVEN IS IN THE BACK SEAT OF MY CADILLAC
HOT CHOCOLATE

NOW PLAYING

- As a day-to-day necessity, Tom Jones has never got over Jerry Lee Lewis's riotous first album from back in 1958.
- On Saturday night, Eska likes French electronic rock from 1980 – particularly drums'n'synths duo Space Art's *Play Back*.
- John 'Boycie' Challis calls Hot Chocolate's 1976 suggestive soul rocker Heaven Is In The Back Seat Of My Cadillac his guilty pleasure.

John Challis

COUNT BOYCIE

What music are you currently grooving to?

Hot Chocolate. Along with **Abba** they were one of my guilty pleasures! I was supposed to be macho, but I always loved Errol Brown's voice. Heaven Is In The Back Seat Of My Cadillac – pretty groovy with a dirty sound that I like. I really like **The Rolling Stones** too, a lot!

What, if push comes to shove, is your all-time favourite album?

Exile On Main St. It was almost like a love album because of the sense of urgency it has. Such a brilliant album.

What was the first record you ever bought? And where did you buy it?

It was in '57, I think. This was when skiffle was the thing. My favourite group were **The Vipers**, I bought their version of Cumberland Gap on 78 from a shop in Addlestone in Surrey. It was terribly exciting and it made me pick up a guitar and form a little band at school. Then you started looking for the American records, **Fats Domino** and all that.

Which musician have you ever wanted to be?

I've always admired **Brian Jones**. He was the first person I heard play slide guitar. I never copied his haircut though! Before I was into skiffle I was into traditional jazz, so I wanted to play the trumpet too. Music was the only other thing I wanted to do apart from acting. Well, that and make a century for England.

What do you sing in the shower?

I try to sing Here I Go Again by **Whitesnake**, David Coverdale is a great character and has a wonderful voice. My wife sometimes records me – it really is not very good at all, embarrassing in fact.

What is your favourite Saturday night record?

Saturday Night At The Movies, **The Drifters**. That makes me have a dance, and I really like the **Bee Gees**' disco stuff too.

And your Sunday morning record?

Anything by **Nat King Cole**. Some voices are just so special and his is one of them.

Visit John on Facebook for news of his Only Fools And Boycie show.

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THEORIES, RANTS, ETC.

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"HOW DO YOU GUYS GET YOUR MAGAZINE out?" asked David Bowie in the summer of 2002. He had just finished guest editing MOJO 104 and, despite his hellish schedule, was being asked to do more… Exasperated, he let rip, and yet Bowie had thrown himself wholeheartedly into the role of editor, writing for the magazine, and conducting a truly revelatory interview with Paul Du Noyer for that very issue (revisited on page 72 this issue). At the heart of the work he undertook for MOJO lay his deep love of music, and a firm sense of self. Those traits he shared with Motörhead leader Lemmy. The loss of both men during the course of this issue has been a source of great sadness, but has also made us determined to celebrate both in the only way we know: by listening to their music, feeling its impact, and communicating its excitement. That is what drives MOJO ever onwards. And that's also how we get our magazine out…

Phil

PHIL ALEXANDER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

I apologise for leaving

As the real fans (and not Lombards like Cameron & Osborne. Bowie fans ? Do me a favour) gather in Brixton, as they gathered in New York for Lennon, I feel very sad. Yet at the same time I remember the appearance on Top Of The Pops of Starman being performed and that lad dancing in his tank top in the background as Bowie put his arm around Ronson. That makes me smile. He became an icon himself, that lad, in some ways. Remember David with that clip, please, and you "celebrities" and politicians, just back off and leave us alone. You're only tweeting to remind us of your existence, some of you.

I also thoroughly enjoyed the articles related to 1976 in MOJO 267. Such memories. One being Derby Leisure Committee cancelling the gig on the Anarchy Tour because the Sex Pistols refused to play their set to them beforehand.

When my friends and I got there at the King's Hall, there was a little note pinned to the door saying "Gig cancelled". John Peel often mentioned this little story on his radio show as he had got to Derby for the gig only to be disappointed. We went for a drink instead and in one pub there were some "bikers" (who I just know lived with their mums) banging on about how punks were the nerds you used to bully at junior school.

I was fortunate to be able to get to the gig at Huddersfield Ivanhoe's on Christmas Day, 1977, although by then Vicious was in the band (I don't think his bass guitar was even plugged in). His contribution to the evening at one point was to ask if anyone wanted to "suck [me] off". Lovely.

You can, by the way, get some decent bootleg CDs of the evening gig (the afternoon gig was for the children of striking firemen). There is footage of both in The Filth And The Fury and just behind the mayhem of punks in front of the stage at the evening gig you can glimpse my face for a millisecond. I still have all my original Pistols singles up to and including Holidays, in the picture sleeves. They have lost none of their power. Forty years ago… Good grief.

Terry Maunder, Kirkstall, Leeds

Are you watching closely?

Greetings! In the Sex Pistols Situation Vacant article in MOJO 267 Glen Matlock incorrectly states that the Teenage Rebels gig was at the Torrington. In fact, it was at the Pied Bull in Islington. I know because I was "the bloke".

Garry (Raggy) Lewis, via e-mail

The better magician

With the release of the diamond mine that is the new Graham Bond *Live At The BBC And Other Stories* box set, I was rather hoping to see a full review and possibly even an accompanying feature piece on this most under-recognised genius. What did I get? Despite the four stars awarded (I'd have bestowed an easy 'five' myself) a mere 40 words in the Reissues Extras section. It's high time you rectified the omission of Mr Bond from your pages and gave us something in depth.

And while I'm here… I've just read the Punk Anniversary Special from cover to cover and am still

looking for the word 'Ruts'. Peace, love and outrage.
Mark Sanders, Rushden, Northamptonshire

They're all favourites

Delighted to read Laurence Freel's letter in MOJO 266. The Beatles "brought the sun out" for me, too. I thought how different my story is from Mr Freel's, but yet how we share such similar sentiments for the same band. I wasn't even around when John died, let alone while the band was going. I was born in the early '80s and spent much of my childhood sick in bed. Many days were passed watching Thomas the Tank Engine, hence how I was exposed to Ringo, and reading Rupert Bear. And Paul McCartney had just come out with the Frog Chorus and his Rupert affiliation. My dad bought me a picture print of the Frog Chorus that I still have on my wall. I know a lot of people don't rate the song of the same name, but it got me into Macca. He was featured in an issue of another popular music magazine, and my parents allowed me to buy it with my pocket money. It mentioned his previous work, and I remember telling my mother, on a car journey, "Did you know that Paul McCartney was once in The Beatles?" I was only about five!

Years went by, and as a teenager, I was more into the music of my era, particularly hip hop. I ended up having a nervous breakdown in 2000. It took me five years to recover, and a large part of that recovery was invested in music. I'm pleased to say that MOJO played a part. I bought a few recommended albums of the time, The Shins' *Chutes Too Narrow* being a favourite. I also started getting more into older stuff, legendary stuff that I decided I must get into. I developed a fascination with Dylan, and Simon & Garfunkel. I adored The Beach Boys.

But nothing compared to The Beatles. I'd heard their material before, sure, but I'd never listened, not really. I spent a year obsessing over them, and with the help of MOJO, my time spent immersing myself in their work opened up new possibilities to me. It was like opening a door to find yourself in a mystical kingdom, a beautiful view before you. As Mr Freel put it, it made the sun come out.

Two people, two vastly different experiences, one legendary band, and some outstanding writing courtesy of you guys. It shows how the power of The Beatles spreads, how it can affect anyone. The Beatles made anything seem possible. I think all popular music owes them a debt of gratitude.
John Wilding, Hessle, East Yorkshire

Things don't always go as planned

I just finished the latest Bob Dylan bootleg, which projected me back to *Biograph* in 1985. No one should ever second-guess Bob, but Abandoned Love really spoke to me, a superior Dylan song: Bob vocals, guitar, harmonica; Howie Wyeth, drums; Scarlet Rivera, violin; and Rob Stoner, bass. A beautiful lyrical statement of fading love made perfect by Rob Stoner's high lonesome bluegrass harmony. How did it not make it onto *Desire*?
Terry Truman, Centennial, Colorado, USA

I followed them too long

I enjoyed MOJO 267 enormously, but can't help commenting on the absence of any Wilco album after 2004 in the How To Buy Jeff Tweedy. Am I alone in fantasising that *Sky Blue Sky* shows us what The Beatles would have sounded like in 2007? The generic stretch of The Whole Love is ridiculously exciting and it contains some of Tweedy's best songs. The musicianship on these albums is also, quite frankly, gobsmacking. As most Wilco fans know, *Sky Blue Sky* got its name from a Chicago sandwich bar; Tweedy once joked that he preferred their earlier, experimental sandwiches. While no one would deny that *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot* and *A Ghost Is Born* are immense, towering achievements, it's a shame if the shadow they cast prevents us from appreciating what came next: time to try a different sandwich. PS: Loved that Elvis Costello CD that came with MOJO 265.
Christopher Ranger, via e-mail

Man's grasp exceeds his nerve

I didn't particularly enjoy MOJO 267. However, there's always something in every issue that justifies the cover price, especially if your reader, like me, equates the cost of each mag to the price of a pint in a London pub.

I've always loved Ambulance Blues on Neil Young's *On The Beach* album ever since my brother Pete recommended the record to me 10 years ago. To read that Neil, a fan of Bert Jansch, had inadvertently lifted the melody from Jansch's Needle Of Death reminded me of the controversy surrounding my all time hero Steve Winwood's Roll With It. There it was held, after litigation, that Winwood had copied the Holland-Dozier-Holland/ Jr. Walker hit Roadrunner. I'd long wondered if Winwood intentionally lifted the song.

Extensive Googling failed to provide the answer, but after a spot of Wikipedia, I learnt that Neil said of his plagiarism that he "wasn't even aware of it, and someone else drew his attention to it". He was a big fan of Bert Jansch. Just as Steve Winwood was a big fan of Jr. Walker. I can't imagine how any artist is able to avoid subconscious copying with so much published material sitting in their memory banks.
David M Briffa, Sturminster Newton, Dorset

Thank you for your kind words, David. With regards to MOJO's price, you will notice a slight increase this month. This is due to the fact that our production costs have risen slightly and we are therefore obliged to raise the price. Due to the late breaking news of David Bowie's passing, we made the decision to withdraw the CD from this issue as it would made for an incongruous package. We have added a series of commemorative posters to this month's magazine, but rest assured the CD will return next month. We will also be working on further enhanced magazine packages in the future that we hope you will also enjoy.

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FAMILYMATTERS

STONE (AGAIN)

Sly speaks! For new film portrait I Want To Take You Higher. Plus, surreal texts and pink tutus.

When Sly Stone made a surprise appearance with the Family Stone last August in New Jersey, even his bandmates didn't know it was happening until moments before. So how has film-maker Mark Kidel managed to track down the reclusive genre-melding genius for a new, in-production documentary?

"With great difficulty and enormous perseverance," says the Bristol-based Kidel, whose previous works include films on Elvis Costello, Tricky and the warmly regarded 1975 Kursaal Flyers' road movie So You Wanna Be A Rock'n'Roll Star? "He's so mercurial, so difficult to pin down, sort of 'no fixed abode'…"

The film will examine the genesis of Sly And The Family Stone and take the story through 1971's landmark LP *There's A Riot Goin' On* and on to 1973's *Fresh*. Other band members will also contribute, while footage includes an unseen concert in Harlem. "Running through the conversation we had is a kind of very philosophical attitude about black and white relations," reflects Kidel. "Basically, he says white people have got more guns and there's no point in trying to fight them. There is a tremendous deep resentment, and making the film I learned such a lot about what it means to be black in the USA."

Work began six years ago, when Kidel, who lived on the US East Coast in the late '60s, connected to Sly via collector Neal Austinson. "[Sly] seemed very warm and friendly," recalls Kidel, "which he always is when he's 'on', but you have to accept that he's a drug addict and he has moments when he's more 'on' than others. But it's not something I ever felt I was able to talk to him about, these are personal things and I wanted to talk to him about music."

After an early meeting at Sly's West Hollywood apartment, Kidel remembers, "he had to go out and buy a pink tutu, I think for his niece. I went with him in his BMW to this joke and costume shop on Sunset Strip. I wish I'd been filming that."

A second round of interviews was conducted 18 months ago, with Sly residing in a camper van parked outside a friend's parents' house. "I had to wait from one day to the next and hope that he was going to come forward," says Kidel, who recounts a poignant story of filming Sly getting his laptop back from a pawnshop. "We exchanged loads of surreal texts. He's an extraordinary surreal texter, a poet. They're like, I dunno, William Burroughs, you have to decode them."

In the film Sly speaks of the continuing importance of his upbringing in the Church Of God In Christ, declaring, "the spirit, that's what it is. It's just beautiful in church and all of a sudden… everybody jumps up [claps], it was perfect timing and you can feel it". Did he see any evidence that Sly was still a creating musician? "He acts as if he were," says Kidel, who is still looking for interested partners for the film, whose release date is yet to be finalised. "He still does definitely have sessions with George Clinton and with other people. He still talks about projects."

Ian Harrison

Super Sly: (main) the artiste live on October 24, 1973; (inset) *There's A Riot Goin' On* and *Fresh* albums; (bottom left) Sly joins The Family Stone at the Count Basie Theatre, New Jersey, August 23, 2015.

FRESH
Sly and the Family Stone

"SLY STILL DOES HAVE SESSIONS WITH GEORGE CLINTON AND WITH OTHER PEOPLE…"

Getty Images (2)

ON!

THE HOT NEWS AND
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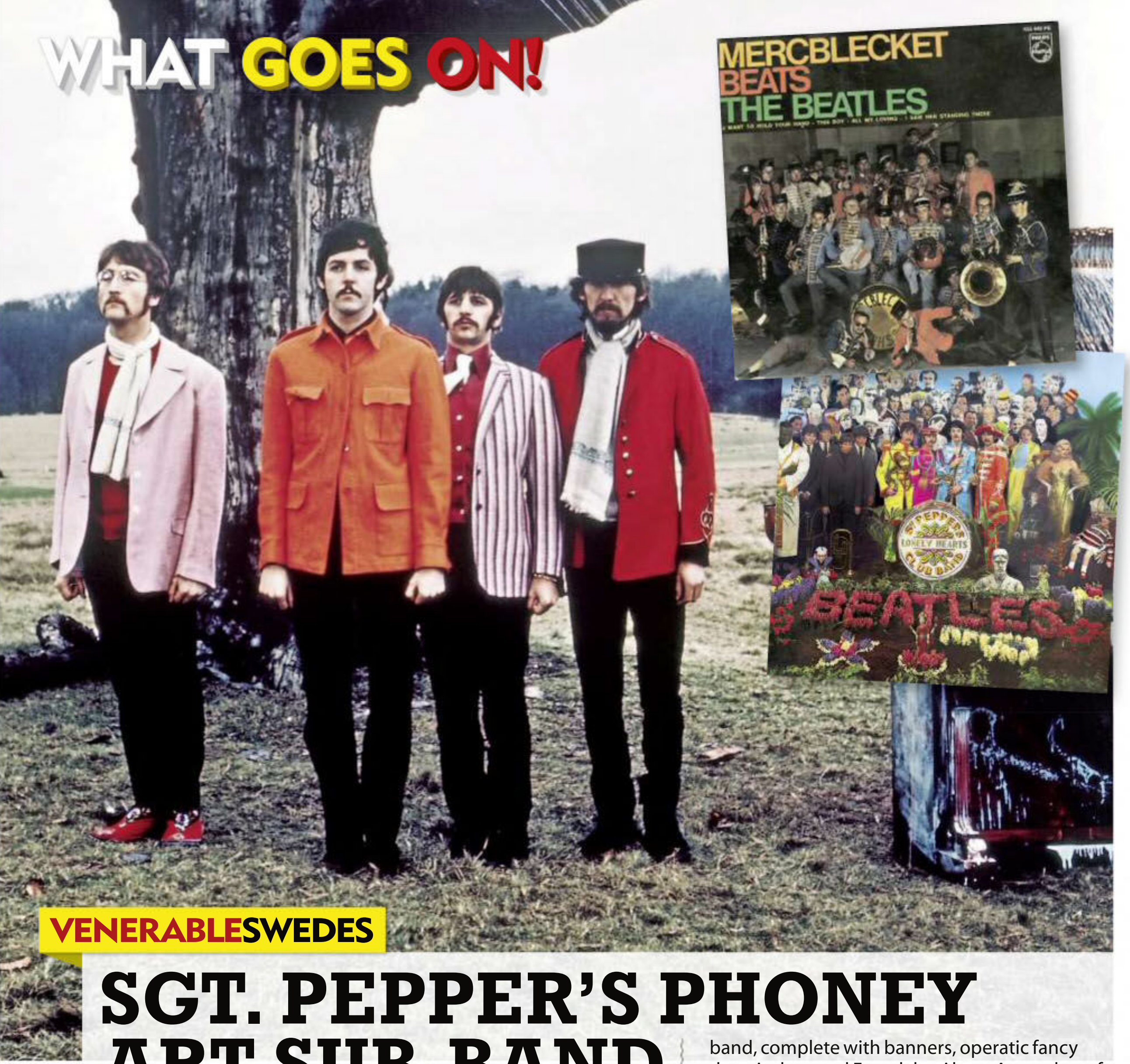

VENERABLESWEDES

SGT. PEPPER'S PHONEY ART SUB-BAND

The inspiration for the *Sgt. Pepper* sleeve art, discovered in Sweden?

Extra Svenska-y perception: (above) The Beatles in 1967, with the sleeve of *Sgt. Pepper* and the strangely congruent Mercblecket Beats The Beatles; (below) Paul reflects.

At first look, the 7-inch EP Mercblecket Beats The Beatles looks like another enthusiastic but harmless Fabs cash in, parodying the *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* sleeve as it tries to tempt you to listen to its versions of some 1963 tunes. But look again – this 7-inch dates from 1964, a full three years before the group's groundbreaking, era-defining eighth album. What's going on?

Of *Sgt. Pepper*, Paul McCartney later remembered telling his bandmates, "As we're trying to get away from ourselves – to get away from touring and into a more surreal thing – how about if we become an alter-ego band?" It's known that he drew an illustration for designers Peter Blake and Jann Haworth, plus art director Robert Fraser and photographer Michael Cooper, to work from. Where the visual idea originated might be gleaned from the group's visit to Sweden in July 1964, when they played two shows at the Johanneshovs Isstadion and made an appearance on national TV.

Enter Mercblecket, a group of students from the Stockholm School of Economics who specialised in playing antique songs on brass instruments. As can be seen on a YouTube clip of The Beatles' arrival at the Stockholm Arlanda airport, Mercblecket were part of the welcoming committee and played in close proximity to the band, complete with banners, operatic fancy dress jackets and French kepi hats. A member of the group was Roger Wallis, an English exchange student from Rugby who sang and arranged the songs covered on the EP in question. It transpires that Wallis, who still lives in Sweden and works for the country's performing rights society, presented McCartney with a copy of the record.

> "HOW ABOUT IF WE BECOME AN ALTER-EGO BAND?" - **McCartney**

This curious trail was picked up on by Swedish record dealer Jörgen Johansson, who noted the similarity and managed to track down a copy online. "As Paul McCartney made the initial ink drawing, I thought that he somehow had seen the Swedish EP," he says. "I phoned Roger Wallis in November 2015 and he confirmed that he personally handed over a copy of the EP to Paul – who wanted a copy – at the hotel The Beatles were staying at, the Forresta Hotel in Lidingö, Stockholm. He hadn't thought about it but when I mentioned it, he agreed on the similarities."

While the global Beatles cognoscenti absorbs this new element into Fabs lore, it seems proper to ask what Mercblecket Beats The Beatles sounds like. "As this is from 1964 and performed by a student brass band," says Johansson, "it's sort of comedy style, kinda unique though."

In other Fabs-related news, February 26 sees the audio and DVD release of George Fest: A Night To Celebrate The Music Of George Harrison, to mark what would have been George's 73rd birthday. Recorded in September 2014 at Los Angeles' Fonda Theatre, the night saw Brian Wilson with Al Jardine performing My Sweet Lord, The Flaming Lips' take on What Is Life, and Be Here Now sung by Ian Astbury, plus other interpretations by Norah Jones, 'Weird Al' Yankovic and more.

MOJO DIARY

FEBRUARY 12

Want to visit the site of the Pegasus in N16 (where **Johnny Rotten**'s arm was slashed in '77) or **Mark Perry**'s old family home in Deptford? You're in luck. Culture historian **Paul Gorman**, in cahoots with mapmakers Herb Lester Associates, publishes Punk London: In The City 1975-78. Within is a guide to more than 100 significant addresses of the period, including shops, pubs, homes, squats, colleges, studios and venues.

FEBRUARY 13

Marking 40 years since their first gig, **Charles Bullen** and **Charles Hayward** play the second of their THIS IS NOT THIS HEAT performances at the Café Oto in east London. They promise "new interpretations of their influential music in collaboration with an impressive ensemble of music luminaries." To coincide, This Heat's three albums have been reissued on vinyl by Light In The Attic.

MARCH 1

Duke Ellington: An American Composer And Icon is published by Rizzoli International. It's written by **Steven Brower** – whose previous works include books on **Louis Armstrong** and **Woody Guthrie** – with contributions from **Dave Brubeck**, **Cornel West**, **Quincy Jones**, **Tony Bennett** and Duke's granddaughter **Mercedes**. Unprecedented access to the family archives is promised, with unseen sepia photography and playbills from the '20s.

Alamy (2), Rex (2)

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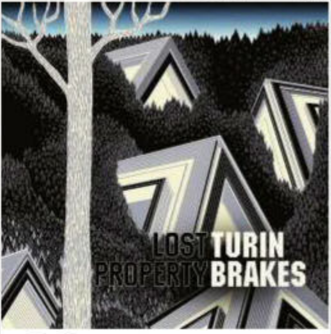
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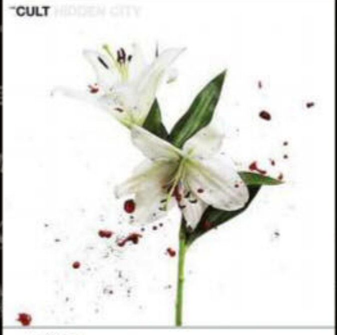
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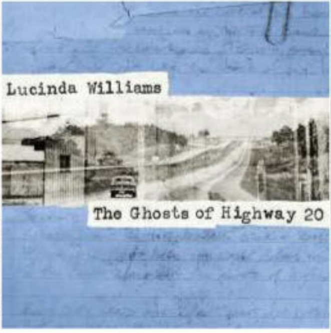
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MOJOWORKING

SWANS

Thinking in epic terms in Dallas and Seattle, Gira prepares the band's farewell.

Swansong: Michael Gira in Sonic Ranch studios, Texas; (right) Gira with Christoph Hahn (right) and Phil Puleo.

"It sounds like the musical equivalent of Ben-Hur," says Swans fulcrum Michael Gira on the phone from Berlin, where he's mixing the band's new album. "Ben-Hur coupled with Kurosawa's Ran." The notion of Akira Kurosawa's powerful cinematic tale of 16th-century Japan combined with a chariot-riding Charlton Heston indicates astonishing scope for any band, even Swans. Since Los Angeles-born Gira reformed the band in 2010, these exhilarating post-punk absolutists have released three albums, including the 121 minutes of 2014's *To Be Kind*. Gira has said the new Swans album will be their last.

"It is epic," say Gira. "One piece has 240 separate tracks. But there are also a lot of delicate moments. There's a lot of orchestration – strings, horns, female singers. But no bagpipes this time [as there were on 2012 album *The Seer*]. The longest piece is 28 minutes, and there are a couple that are 22, 23… The songs are that long because that's how they turned out. They're not a progressive-rock suite or something. To me it's all in service of emotion and I think there's a lot of that."

> "THE ALBUM IS VALEDICTORY JUST BECAUSE THE MUSIC ITSELF IS VALEDICTORY"

As with *To Be Kind*, initial recording took place with producer/engineer John Congleton at the Sonic Ranch studio in Texas. This was followed by further work in Dallas and then a move to the northwest. Gira: "I went to Seattle [to Soundgarden's studio] and worked with my dear friend Bill Rieflin [who's played drums for bands from Revolting Cocks to R.E.M. and King Crimson and has contributed to Swans albums since 1996]. Bill played pretty much any instrument you can imagine – piano, mellotron, drums, bass, singing."

The Seer and *To Be Kind* albums, respectively, featured vocals from the Yeah Yeah Yeahs' Karen O and Annie Clark, aka St. Vincent. There are no equivalent guests this time, but there is one notable outside contributor. "My wife Jennifer," says Gira, "sings one of the central tracks. She's not an aspiring musician but she happens to be able to sing well and I wrote a song specifically for her."

After this final album Gira says he will occasionally use the Swans name and work with members of this last line-up. "The album is valedictory just because the music itself is valedictory," he says. "Every album is kind of always the last one. It's always the most important thing you could ever do."

Roy Wilkinson

FACT SHEET

Title: TBC
Date: May 2016.
Production: Michael Gira
Songs: The World Looks Red / The World Looks Black / Cloud Of Forgetting / The Glowing Man / Finally Peace
The Buzz: "It's more detailed and nuanced than the last few records – there are some very pretty, idyllic things, in among the cataclysm. I invest everything I have in trying to make sure it's the best record ever made (*laughs*). Then it takes time later to realise if I've failed…" *Michael Gira*

ALSOWORKING

…they're busy with **NEW ORDER**, but **Stephen Morris** and **Gillian Gilbert** also have a new Other Two album underway. "We've got to write more," says Steve, explaining that certain elements ended up on New Order's *Music Complete*. "I've been doing it for three years," he adds. "Now it's not even a quarter of an Other Two album" …as well as touring Europe in February, **SHUGGIE OTIS** will release his first all-new album since 1974's *Information Inspiration* this year …reformed shoegazers **LUSH** (**Miki Berenyi**, left) have been back in the studio recording new music two EPs will be released this year, though the second may mutate into an album. Superfan **Jim Abbiss** and **Daniel Hunt**, ex- of Ladytron, produce: songs promise to bear the group's particular stamp, as will the 12-inch artwork… after touring The River, **BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN** will make a new solo album, and then tour that …also coming is **JEAN-MICHEL JARRE**'s *Electronica 2*, featuring brand new collaborations with **Julia Holter** (right), **Gary Numan** and **Hans Zimmer**. "We have that privilege, as musicians, to share and to express things that are really personal," he muses, adding that age is no barrier to creativity. "The great Portuguese film-maker, **Manoel de Oliveira**, he did his last movie at 102!" …and coming in March, **PRIMAL SCREAM** release their eleventh album, which exults in the title *Chaosmosis*!

Marco Porsia, Eyevine

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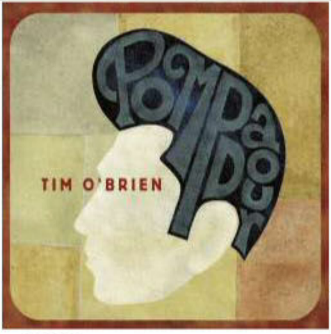
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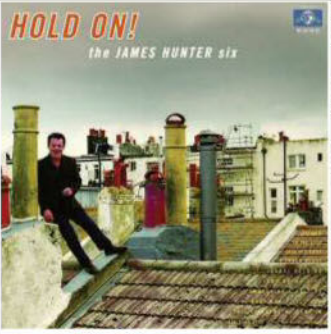
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Party fierce four: Savages (above, from left) Ayse Hassan, Jehnny Beth, Fay Milton and Gemma Thompson; (below) Coltrane blows for the Red planet.

MOJOPLAYLIST

Keep jumpin' with the month's best greasy soul, intergalactic techno and existential torch song!

1 SAVAGES

ADORE

Where Savages voice Jehnny Beth observes archly, "I adore life… I know evil when I see it" on a Cave-esque brooding beast which contains more than a hint of The Smiths. It keeps burning, avoiding simple quiet-loud dynamics for something more tension-filled and mysterious. And, having described the song's parent album *Adore Life* as involving survival, love, anger and revolt, she's not about to disturb Savages' enigmatic equilibrium. "I'm throwing all these words at you," she challenges. "You just pick one." Striking video, too.

Find it: *YouTube*

2 **THE BUG FT. THE SPACEAPE** GUNS OF BRIXTON

Included in a sudden upload frenzy also featuring Bug remixes for Thom Yorke, the Beastie Boys and Grace Jones, the bass diabolist and late MC remix The Clash's frontlines classic into a nightmare wasteland of dread and paranoia.

Find it: *SoundCloud*

3 **THE SUPREMES** BUTTERED POPCORN

Greasy, gooey and sticky, we've been grooving to the Motown girl group's salty 1961 A-side courtesy of Third Man Records lovely repro 7-inch reissues of early Tamla sides, produced for the launch of the label's new Detroit store back in November.

Find it: *YouTube.*

4 **RADIOHEAD** SPECTRE

According to Thom Yorke on Twitter, Radiohead had a crack at doing the song for the last Bond film. The results weren't quite right to soundtrack bullets and scantily clad ladies, but prove perfect to tease the band's return as they send the Pyramid Song undercover in a soaring, euphoric proto-anthem.

Find it: *SoundCloud*

5 **SURGEON** BDF-3299

Pulsating, unnerving Ballardian techno track from the Birmingham producer's new album, *From Farthest Known Objects*. BDF-3299, incidentally, is named for a galaxy 12.9 billion light years from Earth.

Find it: *SoundCloud*

6 **CO)))LTRANE**

Combining John Coltrane's 1967 track Mars and Sunn 0)))'s 2011 Melvins cover Rabbit's Revenge, this free jazz/heavy drone mash-up works magically well, like glimpsing one of Arthur C Clarke's Monoliths in a photo of the Martian southern highlands taken by NASA's Curiosity Rover.

Find it: *YouTube*

ROKSAN
MOJO listens to all its music on Roksan equipment

> "THIS SUNN 0)))/ COLTRANE MASH UP WORKS MAGICALLY."

7 **TWO STAR TABERNACLE FT. JACK WHITE** ITCHY

A live, grinding rocker which has one Jackson White declaring, "I wish television was black and white again". It's taken from 1998/99 three-album box *Live At The Gold Dollar*.

Find it: *SoundCloud*

8 **BIRTH OF JOY** YOU GOT ME HOWLING

Synapse snapping to the sounds of the MC5 and *Nuggets*, the Dutch trio's new album is foreshadowed by this track that sounds like Deep Purple playing Ça Plane Pour Moi.

Find it: *YouTube*

9 **STUMP** BUFFALO

"Big bottom swing." "Does the fish have chips?" In honour of late voice Mick Lynch, revisit this 1986 indie-Beefheart deluge of incomprehensibility.

Find it: *YouTube*

10 **RALEIGH RITCHIE** KEEP IT SIMPLE (FEAT. STORMZY)

Singing/songwriter/actor Ritchie (aka Jacob Anderson aka hotsie eunuch Grey Worm in Game Of Thrones!) is shaping up to be a pop-soul superstar, hymning the comforts of Friends box-sets.

Find it: *Vevo*

11 **MOA HOLMSTEN** THE RIVER

Former singer of Swedish metallers Meldrum, Holmsten has since indulged her inner Springsteen gonk on a career-spanning album of Bruce covers, including this blood-curdling take.

Find it: *YouTube*

12 **MERSEY WYLIE** DON'T GIVE UP ON ME

The daughter of Pete Wylie brings a vintage R&B groover and declares the necessity of staying strong.

Find it: *SoundCloud*

13 **STEVE MASON** PLANET SIZES

The first single from the impending *Meet The Humans* has a light touch which allows the former Beta Band man's pipes to soar to new, stirringly emotive highs.

Find it: *YouTube*

14 **WHITE DENIM** HOLDA YOU (I'M PSYCHO)

The groove is still there, the crunch as snappy as ever, but the Austin band have switched on a hitherto hidden golden pop light as they explode back with this breathless single.

Find it: *SoundCloud*

15 **MEXRRISSEY** INTERNATIONAL PLAYGIRL

From the album *No Manchester*, the Mexico City Moz-fans reinterpret '89 single The Last Of The Famous International Playboys, in retro-modern Latin style.

Find it: *YouTube*

16 **KEROSCENE** REGRET

Residing and recording in an old west London warehouse has clearly worn off on the newcomers as this single builds into a twitchy, stormy stomp worthy of their decayed surroundings.

Find it: *YouTube*

17 **SPRINGFIELD** TEN YEARS

MOJO contributor Sophie Harris finds mellow folk illumination on her Could It Be? EP. This voice-and-piano old flame song strikes poignant notes.

Find it: *Bandcamp*

18 **THE BEVIS FROND** YOU GOT TO UNWIND

Christmas is long gone but this lovely extra track on LP two of the Cherry Red double vinyl reissue of Nick Saloman's third Frond LP, from 1988, brings it all back; chiming instrumentation, bittersweet melody, broken chords and the perfect restful sentiment.

Find it: *Bandcamp*

19 **THE KVB** IN DEEP

Mastered by Sonic Boom, the first track off the duo's forthcoming LP is every bit as sonically precise as that suggests, with billowing vintage synths and whirring motorik romance.

Find it: *SoundCloud*

20 **FRANK SINATRA JR** BLACK NIGHT

Spotted by the Aquarium Drunkard site in Rick Alverson black comedy, Entertainment – about a Frank Sinatra Jr obsessive – this marries an ominous Nelson Riddle arrangement (based on Leadbelly's In The Pines) to Frank Jr's paranoid lyric. An existential torch song fit to stand alongside his dad's finest.

Find it: *YouTube*

Eyevine

SELFPORTRAIT

YOKO ONO

The artist, musician and activist, in her own words and by her own hand.

I'd describe myself as… a member of the human race.

Music changed me by… music was always with me even when I was an embryo and before.

When I'm not making music I'm… are you asking what I get from music? The main vibration that helps to grow me is in the vibration of music.

My biggest vice is… I have no vice, as I don't believe in its existence.

The last time I was embarrassed was… I am embarrassed every minute for not doing enough of what I should be doing.

My formal qualifications are… None.

The last time I cried was… I cry almost every minute spiritually.

Vinyl, CD or MP3?… all of the three. It's wonderful that we keep adding things to be excited and to love.

My most treasured possession is… my brain. My heart second.

The best book I've read is… any book that passed my memory bank has become a seed that nourishes my brain.

Is the glass half-full or half-empty?… we have been given a coin when we were born. A coin with two sides.

My greatest regret is… I have no regrets. Everything that was to be regretted, I have already regretted. And now it has become the water which gives you good wine.

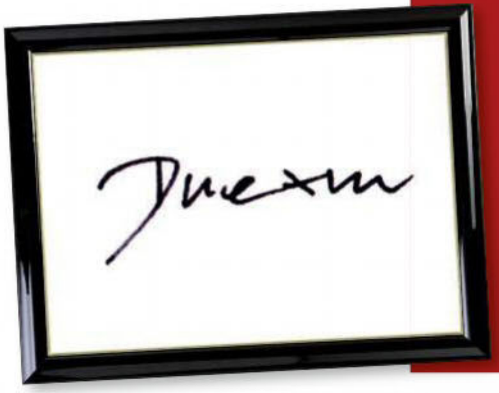
When we die… first, we will quickly remember everything that we have experienced in our lives, minutely and completely. It will help you to move on.

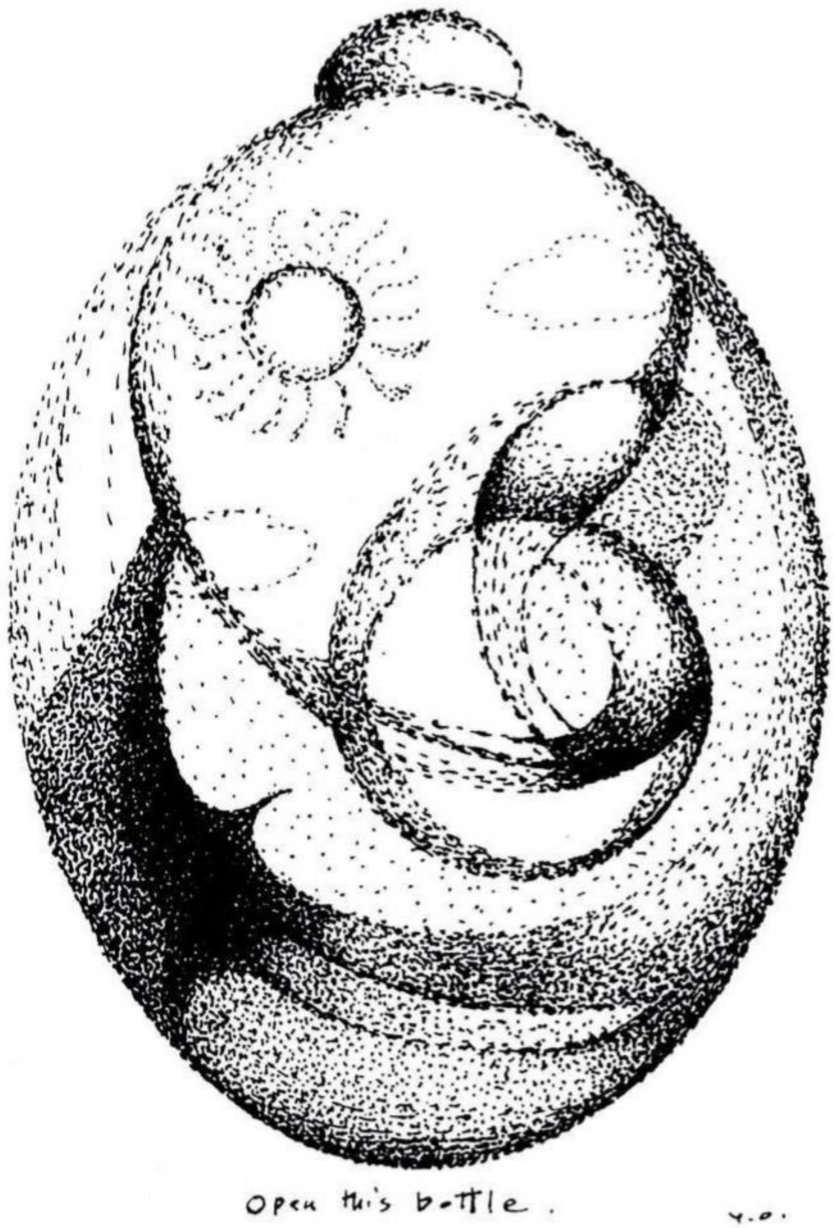
I would like to be remembered as… I would like to be remembered in the way it will be a memory which will help you so we won't make the same mistakes. I would like people to know that there is an immense beauty, love and joy in life. So you would not try to end your life any faster than it has to be. The knowledge of you makes me be full of love. Thank you for being. I love you! Yoko

Yoko Ono's Yes, I'm A Witch Too, featuring collaborations with Sparks, Death Cab For Cutie and tUnE-yArDs is out February 19 on MManimal Group

> "EVERYTHING THAT WAS TO BE REGRETTED, I HAVE ALREADY REGRETTED."

Yoko Ono by Yoko Ono… (below, left) 'Dream'; (right) 'Open This Bottle'.





MONDOMOJO

…last month, **MORRISSEY** broke his silence on the unenthusiastic response to his book The List Of The Lost, telling the Uruguayan newspaper El Observador, "I have many enemies…" has **LIMP BIZKIT**'s **Fred Durst** been seduced by ideas of barechested horseriding? After saying he'd be up for holding a Russian passport and moving to the Crimea, reports say he's been banned from the Ukraine for five years… after releasing her film Heart Of A Dog, **LAURIE ANDERSON** (left) played a Concert For Dogs in Times Square in January, using special frequencies for the 50 or so dogs in attendance. "I really hadn't imagined that many would show up," said Laurie… and good news for fans of reformed cult Mersey retro rockers **THE STAIRS**. Frontman **Edgar Summertyme** tells us, "We're booking some dates for May and looking at another batch at end of year. Have got about just over half an LP of suitable material myself, and **Ged** [**Lynn**, guitar] has some so LP is large possibility!" …**Panasonic** are to relaunch the much-missed SI-1200 turntable, having canned the model in 2010 to better, "reflect the accelerating transformation of the entire audio market from analogue to digital." Oops! …punk vets were intrigued last month when it was announced that lamented NY rock'n'roll dive **CBGB** (below) was to reopen as a restaurant in a Newark airport. But will the restrooms be without doors and properly decorated with graffiti?

Photoshot, Getty Images

Ryan Hunter

Bison street blues: Jake Smith, aka The White Buffalo, comes out of the darkness.

MOJORISING

THE WHITE BUFFALO

Sons Of Anarchy OST-er shines some light on the Americana dirt and gravel.

If you thought Drake had taken the dubious science of "dad-dancing" as far as it could go in 2015's Hotline Bling video, hang on: there's a late challenge from the world of Americana. In The White Buffalo's clip for his track Modern Times, a hirsute and physically imposing good ol' boy high-kicks, hand-jives and generally throws ill-advised shapes over a song of angst at the wrongs of the modern world.

"I thought it would be fun," claims Jake Smith, aka The White Buffalo, a statement which may come as a surprise to anyone familiar with the gravel-voiced, ferociously intense work of this 41-year-old Orange County resident, in particular his dozen-odd contributions to the soundtrack of TV biker drama Sons Of Anarchy. That saga of the New Wild West and Smith's story-songs about outlaws and the downtrodden, drawing on a tradition that runs from Hank Williams and Johnny Cash to Bruce Springsteen and Steve Earle, might have been made for each other. "It was perfect for me," he agrees, "the dark and the light, the conflicted emotions. I don't know why but I like writing about people down on their luck or making bad decisions. People are flawed, you know? And it's even more interesting when you throw a little violence or booze in there…"

That video, though, is part of an effort to push himself out of what he describes as "my go-to – the darker side of life". First single I Got You, an almost-love-song duet with firebrand singer (and great-grand-niece of Judy Garland) Audra Mae, and the accompanying fourth album, *Love And The Death Of Damnation*, get close to chirpy: "I mean, people still get killed," he says, "but it definitely leans more to the positive side."

The mayhem and misery could just be a by-product of his natural baritone, he adds: "It's not like it's part of my personality. I have the voice so I can sell that – it wouldn't come off if you didn't have a little dirt or gravel."

The rest of his "primitive" sound came together, he reckons, from taking up guitar late, when he was at college on a baseball scholarship, and a combination of his twin loves of country and hard-core punk.

"I've been isolated in my own musical world," he explains, "I have a certain approach to guitar that's not easily reproduced."

Sons Of Anarchy was good to him, though more in terms of exposure than hard cash. Touring life now is three musicians in a van, driving themselves and going without a road crew. "I'd rather bring that money home to my family," he says, sounding like one of the blue-collar heroes of his own songs. "You know, it's just a little more work."

James Medd

The White Buffalo's Love And The Death Of Damnation is released on February 12 through Earache.

> "IT'S EVEN MORE INTERESTING WHEN YOU THROW A LITTLE VIOLENCE OR BOOZE IN."

THE White Buffalo
Love and the Death of Damnation

FACT SHEET

- For fans of: Steve Earle, John Hiatt, Jason Isbell
- The White Buffalo name came from the realisation that, "You can't sell T-shirts with the name Jake Smith on them. That, and it's something grander than one dude or singer-songwriter."
- One of Smith's contributions to Sons Of Anarchy was a version of Bohemian Rhapsody – "It came out kinda cool," he reckons, but he regrets that "I didn't get to do the 'Scaramouche' bit."

KEY TRACKS

- I Got You
- Last Call To Heaven
- Fantasy

MINDBLOWERS!

MEG BAIRD

The ex-Espers folk voice and guitar talks cascading sunsets, reductionist fuzz and maximum sultriness.

1 TREES SALLY FREE AND EASY

(from On The Shore, CBS, 1971)

"This rolling, elevated version of a much-covered Cyril Tawney song opened so many doors for me. Trees' take on it is powerful enough to change the whole trajectory of the original. And I always feel like this is the version that led to the covers by Magic Hour (*No Excess Is Absurd*, Twisted Village, 1994) and Flying Saucer Attack (1996, EP). I love those long threads of reinterpretation through music. I also love the way Trees' version builds to deliver that moment where Celia Humphris' otherworldly multitracked voice sings 'sunset' repeatedly over music that sounds like a cascade of sunsets. I know *On The Shore* already has many fans, but I try and make sure everyone checks this song out – just in case."

SMOKIN' WILLIE

2 SMOKIN' WILLIE HOT BLOODED MAMA

(from Smokin' Willie LP, Ulrich Studio, 1972)

"I heard this from one of my favourite guitarists, Willie Lane, back when we were both living in Philadelphia. It's amazingly reductionist rock and fuzz, where you don't really have to play all the notes to make it work or anything. It's totally free of inhibition or hesitation. The room tone sounds like it could be a marginally filled community gymnasium or a remote stone hollow, so it's nearly impossible to guess at any geographical origins. Is it rural? Urban? I'm so jealous of Willie's copy of *Smokin' Willie*. Even the incredible cover art delves into a confounding distortion of human scale that makes you wonder if it's the work of pre-history humans or even alien in origin."

3 BEVERLY WOODS FAIR ANNIE

(from Return To Fingal, cassette, 1983)

"My good friend Russ Waterhouse from Blues Control gave me a copy of this cassette after coming across it on a visit home to the Boston area. The whole recording is a nice, straight collection of traditional songs with lots of hammer dulcimer, but this pared-down rendition of Fair Annie is a stop-you-dead-in-your-tracks standout. A quiet, humble, and illuminated performance of one of those tearjerker traditional songs in which the characters stand up for each other against authority and it actually works out. If ever I doubt the potential of the voice as a way to convey power to large crowds and large spaces, it's great to check in with performances like this."

...AND THE NATIVE HIPSTERS

4 ...AND THE NATIVE HIPSTERS THERE GOES CONCORDE AGAIN...

(Heater Volume 7-inch, 1980)

"I'll never forget the feeling of first hearing this joyfully perplexing song. A woman in some kind of 'heightened state' relates disconnected, surreal, and mundane observations over an unexpected and very psychedelic collage of layers – including a track by Clem Curtis and The Foundations that resembles a '70s sitcom theme as much as anything else. In Heron Oblivion I've been adding spoken passages to my singing – a first for me, and a big stretch. This buoyant and weird song, and the conviction with which the singer declares her love of the colour red – 'red, red, RED!' – have been a major inspiration."

5 KIM JUNG MI YOUR DREAM

(from Now, Fontana, 1973)

"This has been a big hit around the house for a while. And it really makes you wonder why everyone tunes instruments in totally equal temperament all the time. So much power, suggestion, and intent would be lost if this song were perfectly in tune. Kim Jung Mi's vocal performances are amazing on this whole record, but this tough and sultry song – maybe the sultriest ever? – is a highlight on this mostly softer, prettier set of songs. Kim Jung Mi's vocal and the band sound huge and small, up close, familiar, and unknowable all at once. And yet, for all the vulnerable wobbliness of this track, the mystery, emotion, and the spell of the dream are never broken. Hey!"

Meg Baird is part of Heron Oblivion whose debut LP is out on Sub Pop in March

Confounding distortions of human scale: Meg Baird looks up in wonder.

Alissa Anderson

A cut above: Car Seat Headrest's Will Toledo, losing his last vestiges of teenhood.

MOJORISING

CAR SEAT HEADREST

From Seattle: precocious, driven lo-fi indie rock to admire.

In December, Car Seat Headrest's Will Toledo narrated a playlist for online culture show The Dinner Party Download, alongside fellow guests Ian McKellen and Cindy Crawford (who discussed "naughty" Judi Dench and fear of pythons, respectively). "We weren't in the same studio," says Toledo. "If we were, I guess I would've stressed out about it and said as little as possible. I'm definitely not one for parties. It's kind of ironic they chose me at all."

Such is the promise of the 23-year-old Seattle resident, who began releasing music online as Car Seat Headrest in 2010. Now signed to Matador, his *Teens Of Style* album – which features rerecorded material – made a stir with its fuzzy, melodious songs of despair, conflict and searing frankness that suggested Beck, The Magnetic Fields and Guided By Voices. "I try and just be honest and sometimes that means presenting myself as not a very pleasant person," muses Toledo. "But I've got a pop drive too, I guess. That's what I like listening to, things that are catchy, so I try to write that way."

Having managed 11 albums released on Bandcamp – they include *My Back Is Killing Me Baby*, *Nervous Young Man* and *Monomania* – it's no surprise he started young. Taught piano by his dad as a kid in Leesburg, Virginia, Toledo learned to play by ear, and moved on to guitar at middle school. After a diet of Nirvana and Green Day came the more complex, introverted sounds of Neutral Milk Hotel, Radiohead and Leonard Cohen, and as an English major his poetic soul was nurtured while he experimented with laptop recording.

His Car Seat Headrest handle was occasioned by necessity. "I'd started out recording in my parents' house but I didn't feel that I was able to get good vocal performances with my family being able to hear," he says. "So I made the shift into recording in the car [a navy blue Subaru station wagon], where I had some privacy, as quickly as possible."

> "...THEN I MADE THE SHIFT INTO RECORDING IN THE CAR."

2011's self-released *Twin Fantasy* earned online admiration, but he admits he's happy to be competing in a more visible way. "I've been hoping for a while something like this would happen," he says. "It's good I was able to gradually build up from a very small audience to mid-level internet interest audience and get all that under my belt before going national with it... or international!"

Teens Of Style's companion piece *Teens Of Denial* will be out later in 2016. "I don't know if I want to say too much about it yet," he says, "but it's definitely about losing the last vestiges of teenhood and trying to advance into adulthood, with varied results." No more clamming up in the high pressure interview situation, then.

Ian Harrison

Car Seat Headrest tour Europe in February.

Car Seat Headrest
Teens of Style

FACT SHEET

- For fans of: Guided By Voices, New Pornographers, Kelley Stoltz
- He admits the meaning of his moniker has changed. "I was looking for something that didn't say a lot about the music. But I just got more explicit as I went on, so the name is a little incongruous now. It has come to mean everything I've recorded though, so I'm kinda fond of it."
- He's enjoying being in his twenties. "It's nice to be an adult and to be able to do things... before there was a lot of struggle, which is reflected in the music. I always wanted to be more mature than what I was, and it took me a while to catch up."

FACT SHEET

- Something Soon
- Time To Die
- No Passion

ALSORISING

Somewhere a thief not only has an ill-gotten computer but **Kaktus Einarsson** (left, second left) and **Gulli Einarsson** (left, second right) of **FUFANU**'s (left) fledgling efforts as an electro act. Yet robbing the Icelandic pair did them a favour, as the loss of a nearly complete LP drove them towards new horizons. In came a contorted post-rock landscape of sinister whispers and hypnotic grooves. "We now play some serious rock'n'roll because that's what we feel like at the moment," says Kaktus who was also assistant engineer on **Damon Albarn**'s *Everyday Robots* of how Fufanu's 'early burglary years' yielded recent debut *Few More Days To Go*. It's a criminal record worth having. *Paul Stokes*

Having made her vinyl debut in 2013, the jazz-informed Devon-bred singer **ROSIE LOWE** (left) was tipped for success in 2014 *and* 2015. Now with the February release of Lowe's debut album *Control*, her imaginative joining of her English origins and an electric dream of American R&B can finally be accessed. Within, as well as previous single Who's That Girl? and Worry Bout Us, released late last year, are rich synth-soul narratives of therapeutic modernity, addressing broken relationships, inner strength and the wearing effects of beauty myths. Lowe, who co-produces her own work and plays with an all-woman backing group, affirms, "So much love has gone into this body of work." *Clive Prior*

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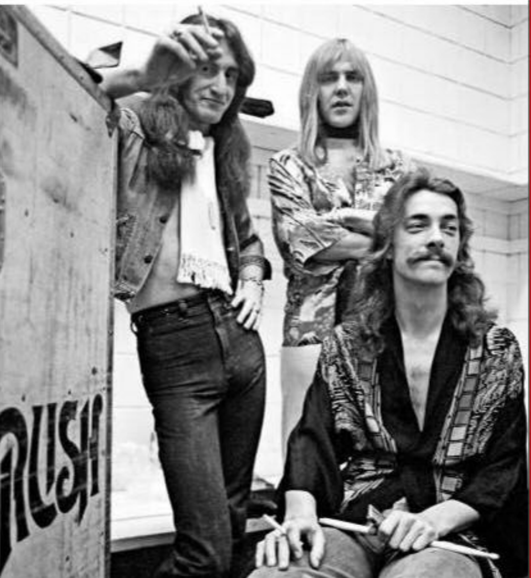
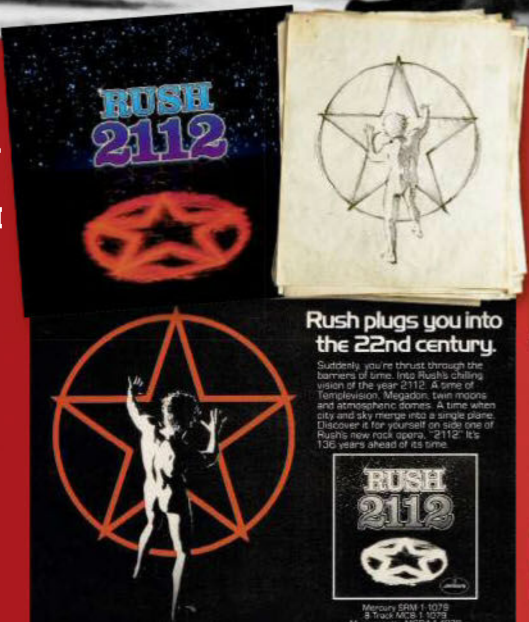
MOJO EYEWITNESS

RUSH MAKE *2112*, 1976

The Toronto heavy proggers felt like they were washed up after 1975's LP *Caress Of Steel*. So they decided to go out in a blaze of glory, with an album featuring a side-long dystopian concept piece based on Ayn Rand's novella Anthem. What came next, they really weren't expecting…



"I AM NOT A VIOLENT TYPE, BUT I WANTED TO PUNCH THE GUY WHO WROTE THAT."



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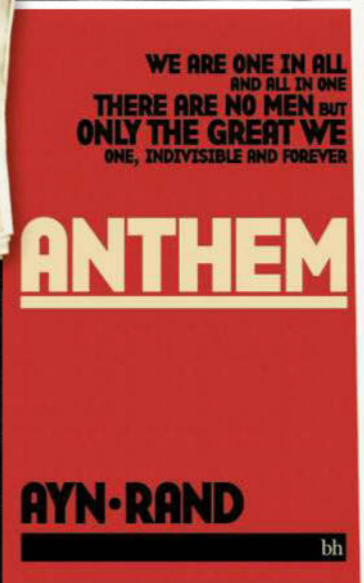


WE ARE ONE IN ALL
AND ALL IN ONE
THERE ARE NO MEN BUT
ONLY THE GREAT WE
ONE, INDIVISIBLE AND FOREVER

ANTHEM

AYN·RAND

bh

RUSH
neil
RUSH
peart

PART 1 "IT WAS A VINDICATION."

Rush voice Geddy Lee on identity crisis, cosmic totalitarianism and UK music weekly grief.

"Our record company Mercury had told us in no uncertain terms that we were a huge disappointment to them. They had signed us on the basis of our first record [*Rush*, 1974], which was pretty straightforward hard rock. But we loved all those English progressive rock bands – Yes and Genesis – and on our third album *Caress Of Steel* we had a song that was 20 minutes, The Fountain Of Lamneth. Mercury was like, 'What the fuck? Who are you guys?' And even we thought that: Who are we?

Caress Of Steel had bombed. The gigs were half-empty. We named it the 'Down The Tubes Tour'. We joked about Neil [Peart, drummer] going back into the farm equipment business, and Alex [Lifeson, guitar] and I going back to painting movie theatres. When we started on *2112*, we thought this would probably be the last record we make. So we were like: fuck you, Mercury. If we're going to go out, we'll go out doing our crazy shit, not failing at what you want us to be.

Neil wrote a story for the song 2112 based on Anthem by Ayn Rand. Neil's story was set in a futuristic totalitarian state, controlled by the priests of the temples of Syrinx. One day our hero finds a device. He's not sure what it is, but it has strings, and he figures out he can make music with it. He presents it to the priests but they shut him down because they want control over everything. He contemplates ending it all, because he doesn't want to live in a world that can't embrace such a thing that he's found…

Neil showed us bits of lyric, and then we went to work at it. The whole thing came together very quickly – another 20-minute song – but it was so much more powerful and focused than The Fountain Of Lamneth. It felt really fresh to us, like we had figured something out. That was side one. It was heavy. So with side two we wanted to show diversity, an alternative version of the band. We had Tears, the pretty side of Rush, and A Passage To Bangkok, our pot-smoker song. We recorded the whole album in four weeks, at Toronto Sound Studios, which was owned by our producer Terry Brown. And it was fun – there was no desperation in the room. We were really proud of what we'd made.

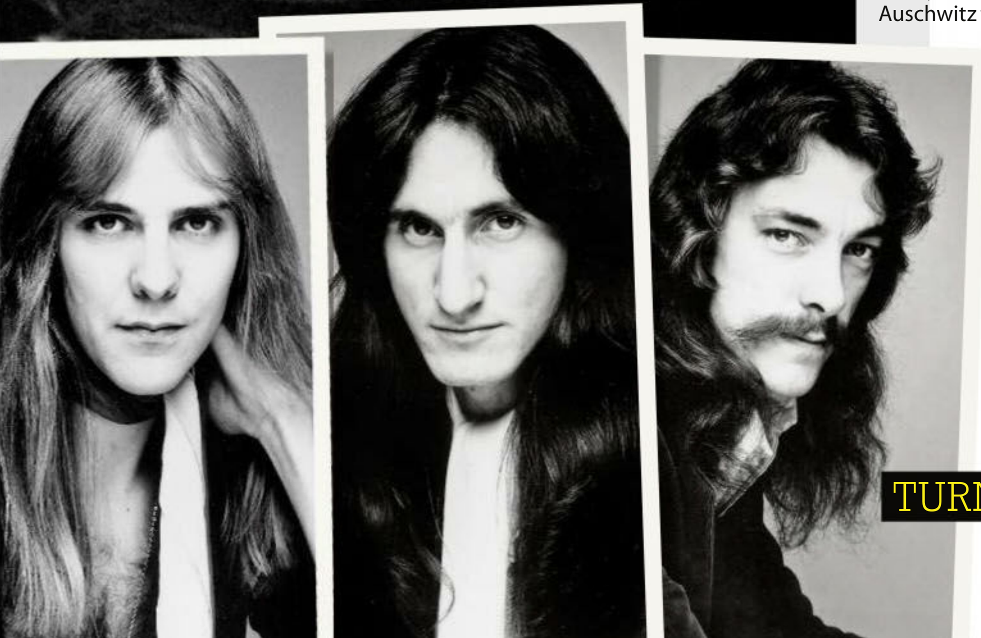
We didn't know what kind of feedback we were going to get from the record company. We were pretty afraid of that. Our manager didn't get it at all, and when he played it for Mercury everyone in the room was puzzled by it – except for Cliff Burnstein, who went on to manage Def Leppard and Metallica. Cliff thought the album was awesome, and for us that was so heartening.

Sales were slow at first. And then we had that terrible thing in England with the NME. 2112 was speaking out against totalitarianism, but the NME called us fascists. It made zero sense. Ayn Rand had a very controversial image as an anti-socialist and extreme right-wing capitalist, but that was a side of her work that was not of interest to us.

My father Morris and my mother Mary were both in Auschwitz for a time, so I was really deeply hurt by that NME story. At that time in Britain, the press was hunting down anything that sniffed of fascism. I can't blame them for that. But they got the wrong guys with us. I am not a violent type, but I wanted to punch the guy who wrote that. Definitely, I could have helped educate him.

In the end, what the NME said didn't matter. At first, *2112* was a slow seller, but when we went back on the road we were getting better gigs, even headlining some shows. It was a defining album. The artwork for the album by our friend Hugh Syme became a brand, it transcended the record and became very representational of us as a band. The album was a vindication. From that point, we were free to make our own mistakes."

Toronto's Expanding Head Band: (main) Rush, live on-stage in December '76, in Springfield, Massachusetts (from left) Alex Lifeson, Geddy Lee and Neil Peart; (bottom row, from left) backstage; the development of Hugh Syme's sleeve-starring Starman logo; Ayn Rand's novel; the band in portrait.



Getty Images, Hugh Syme, SROMGT (3)

TURN OVER! *2112* PRODUCER TERRY BROWN RECALLS WORKING FAST AND NEARLY PLAYING HARD…

PART 2 "A HUGE LEAP FORWARD"

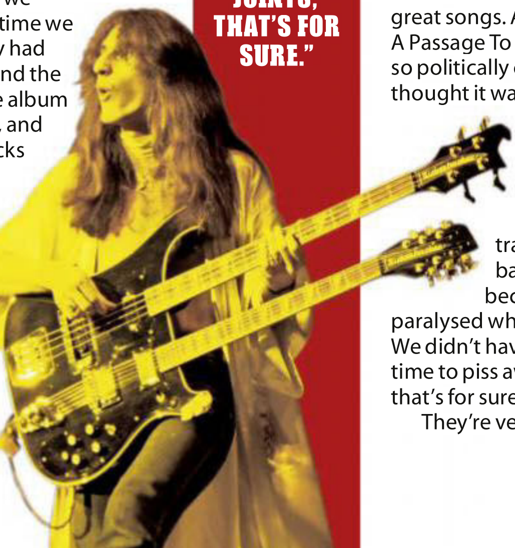
RUSH MAKE 2112, 1976

Producer Terry Brown talks studio laughs, commercial second-guessing and sci-fi mind-stamping.

(Not) doing the Lamneth Walk: Rush in '76 (from left) Lifeson, Peart, Lee; (right) the group with producer Terry Brown (second from right); (below) Geddy gives it some, double-necked style.

"I'm English, but in the mid-'70s I'd been living in Toronto for a number of years, and I'd been producing Rush since their first album. We were all disappointed that *Caress Of Steel* didn't do better, but that wasn't something I ever discussed with the band. Things were moving at a pretty fast pace back then, and when it came to making *2112* we were all just focused on the creative process. I know the record company wanted something commercial. And the band wanted success – but not by compromising what they were doing.

They had a vision of where *2112* should go, and I think we achieved that. By the time we got to the studio, they had the material written and the basic structure for the album – the conceptual side, and then the separate tracks on side two. That 20-minute piece, 2112 itself, had a lot of substance and great dynamics in it. Also, it wasn't as dark as The Fountain Of Lamneth. It was much more uplifting, and I think that made the difference. The science fiction story-line captured everyone's imaginations. And musically, that piece has some real keynote moments, especially the Overture, which really stamped itself on one's mind indelibly.



"WE DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO PISS AWAY SMOKING JOINTS, THAT'S FOR SURE."

I was also confident there was potential there for radio in some of the songs on side two. The Twilight Zone and Something For Nothing were all great songs. And I loved the intro in A Passage To Bangkok. It doesn't seem so politically correct now, but I thought it was a great little motif.

We had four weeks to do the whole record and we worked hard. We smoked a little dope when we'd finished a track and were listening back, but you don't want to become paranoid and paralysed when you're performing. We didn't have inordinate amounts of time to piss away smoking joints, that's for sure.

They're very funny guys, especially Alex, he's hilarious. But they were very serious about making a record, and such strong players. Geddy's vocals were stunning on *2112*. Alex had such a cool approach to his soloing. And of course Neil was this powerhouse of a drummer. For me, as a producer, it was really a question of getting the best performances out of them, and as much energy as possible.

When we finished, I felt that this was a huge leap forward for the band. It was an album you could listen to over and over, because there was so much detail in it. I thought they'd nailed it, totally. Having said that, you never know what will make a hit. But these guys were always out on the road touring, and 2112 was such a dynamic song to play live. It always left the audiences wanting more.

I had a great working relationship with the band. I produced every Rush album up until *Signals* [1982]. But what *2112* did, at that time, was define what the band was all about. I listened to it recently and enjoyed it immensely. It's a great record."

Paul Elliott

Ebet Roberts, SROMGT/Gérard Gentil, couresty of Terry Brown

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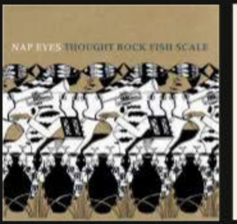

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THE FAT WHITE FAMILY
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ONTHE ROAD

OBESITY CRISIS

Scream! The Fat White Family infect Stoke and Stockton-On-Tees, talk Sean'n'Yoko, the Ireland/Algeria connection and D-R-U-G-S.

Last night was good," says Fat White Family frontman Lias Saoudi. "Someone gave me some ketamine." The band have just played a magnetic set at the Sugarmill in Stoke-on-Trent and Lias is hoping for post-gig stimulation. But, scanning the clientele in a pub by the venue, he's not hopeful. "They all look like Star Wars fans," he decides.

Lias has the twitchy charisma of Vincent Cassel in the film La Haine, and live Fat White Family mix Iggy Pop with classic reverb-drenched rock'n'roll. But in the pocket of Lias's camo jacket sits atypical tour reading – The Scramble For Africa, Thomas Pakenham's 1992 book on imperialism. Similarly, though his stage gambits in Stoke included drenching the moshpit in Guinness and methodically dangling gob-down onto the head of his microphone, the next day he'll talk eloquently about T.S. Eliot and Primo Levi.

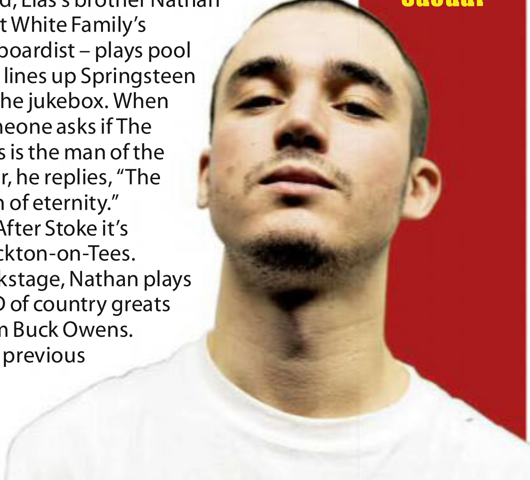
Here is a band many have proclaimed as a beacon of outrageous potency in a sea of caution, one ideally pitched for the higher and lower selves. In the former category, Lias attended the Slade School of Fine Art in London, alma mater to GK Chesterton and Sir Stanley Spencer, and Fat White Family's new album, *Songs For Our Mothers*, was partly recorded at Yoko Ono's mansion in New York state. For the latter, their deranged live appearances have included a show in Sheffield where Lias was stripped to the waist and streaked with his own excreta, while at one Los Angeles gig he took LSD and writhed naked on stage while sticking his fingers in his anus in time to the music.

There's no obvious auto-proctology in Stoke. Instead, in the pub beforehand, Lias's brother Nathan – Fat White Family's keyboardist – plays pool and lines up Springsteen on the jukebox. When someone asks if The Boss is the man of the hour, he replies, "The man of eternity."

After Stoke it's Stockton-on-Tees. Backstage, Nathan plays a CD of country greats from Buck Owens. The previous night featured 2014 single I Am Mark E Smith. Backstage at Glastonbury 2015, Fat White Family had a robust dialogue with The Fall.

FWF live, the Georgian Theatre, Stockton-on-Tees, December 4 (from left) Adam Harmer, Severin Black, Lias Saoudi, Dale Barclay.

> "BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN IS THE MAN OF ETERNITY."
> Nathan Saoudi



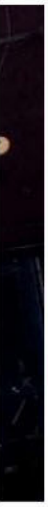
"The Fall were all sat there and he [Mark Smith] had a bottle of champagne," remembers Lias. "Nathan says, 'Mark, can I have a drink of your champagne?' He's like 'Yeah, yeah, come here.' He pours out a big glass and throws it in [Nathan's] face."

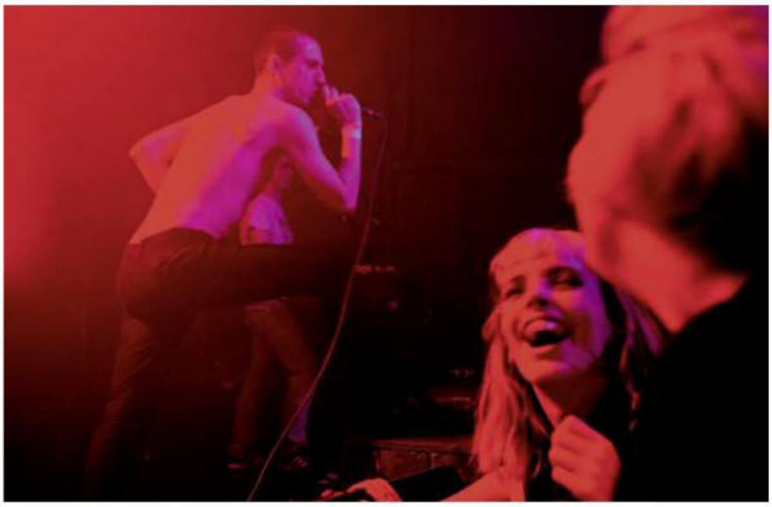
"I said, That's not a nice thing to do, apologise," adds Nathan. "He's like, 'Do you want a whisky?' He gave me a whisky…"

Says Lias, "And Nathan goes, 'Fuck you!' (*imitates howls as Nathan throws whisky in his face*). All The Fall got up… We thought we were about to have a brawl with The Fall, who are my favourite band. We ended just sat round chatting and [Mark Smith] said he really liked the band. You had two natural-born antagonists and he met his match with Nathan. That was the highlight of my year, if not my life…"

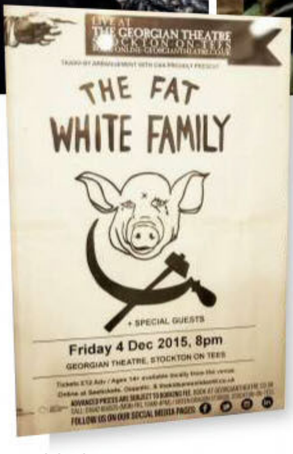
Fat White Family last played Stockton about a year ago. Of that line-up only Lias, Nathan and Bournemouth-born guitarist Adam Harmer remain. There's a new rhythm section – drummer Severin Black from south London and bassist Taishi Nagasaka from Nagoya, Japan. The key absentee is Saul Adamczewski, Lias's co-songwriter. "He's on leave," says Lias. "Being rehabilitated." Saul is in America being treated for his drug use. His stand-in on guitar is suave Dale

Andy Cotterill (10)





Building a squalid foundation: (clockwise from top left) lyrics and jazz-fags; post-gig in Stockton; on-stage at the Sugarmill, Stoke, December 3, 2015; outside the venue (with Taishi Nagasaka, third from right) and in the car park (both Stoke); Lias has a bevvy; poster for the Stockton gig; Stoke fans get into it; shirt-less in Stoke; (below) absent guitarist Saul Adamczewski.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"EVERYONE LOOK BUSY"

Barclay, ex-frontman of Glasgow's The Amazing Snakeheads.

Heroin is addressed on their new album, on the track Tinfoil Deathstar. Other subjects include Harold Shipman, Ike Turner's abuse of Tina and a recurring consideration of fascism – including a track called Goodbye To Goebbels. "That's a love song from Hitler to Goebbels," says Lias. "The album is about abusive relationships – sa-do-masochism, which I suppose you could say is Nazis and smack."

Lias adds it would take wilful misapprehension to read the band as far-right hate mongers, though. "What would I say if someone decided we were anti-Semitic neo-Nazis?" he posits. "I'd find it highly amusing if people believe such gibberish. We've made our political stance clear… We're not anti-Semites but we are firmly anti-Israel." Being among the select number of Algerian-Irish in rock, the brothers have themselves been targets of bigotry. Their Algerian father's work in IT made for itinerant family life, and while living in Northern Ireland, Lias and Nathan were both called racial epithets by their school peers.

They talk of being befriended by John Lennon's son Sean, who produced several Fat White Family tracks – one of which, Satisfied, is on the new album. Lias has fond memories of recording at Yoko Ono's house: "There was all kinds of Beatles stuff – books on the primal scream, with [John's] notation inside. I love The Beatles. When I was 14 I had all their albums…"

As the band make ready for more compelling rock action at Stockton's Georgian Theatre, Lias talks about another band favourite – Slovenia's totalitarian provocateurs Laibach.

"Laibach were a big influence on the album," he says. "They beat us to the punch when they played in North Korea. Ah well, tonight Stockton-on-Tees, tomorrow, Pyongyang."

Roy Wilkinson

SAUD AND PROUD

The pre-Fat Whites band The Saudis, explained.

Lias: "A long way back, some people from my family in Algeria went to Saudi Arabia. That's where the name Saoudi comes from. When you have a name like that it seemed like a no-brainer let's be called The Saudis. So we toured Algeria [in 2009]. In London we'd play to at most 50 people, but this was like, 600 people. In the cities it was pandemonium; in the small towns they were gobsmacked, staring in shock. These people would never have seen anyone from Europe. We played all round Kabylia in the north, a mountainous area. It was all men at the gigs no women. Outside the butcher's there'd be a cow's head on the street, flies all around it… men at cafés smashing down dominoes and shouting at each other, coffee like tar. We went to learn how to write songs. We were there for three months and there was nothing else to do. [Fat White Family song] Touch The Leather started over there. Alexander [Sebley], who was in The Saudis and co-wrote Touch The Leather, was sitting on this car seat, really hot, like Sahara temperature. He was like, 'Touch the leather, ooh, touch the leather.'"

TIMEMACHINE

FEBRUARY 1992 ...THE KLF SAVAGE THE BRIT AWARDS

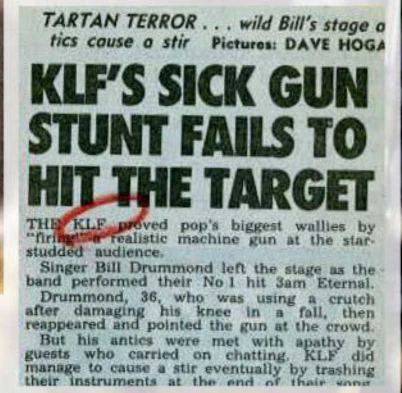
FEBRUARY 12 The videos flashed onto the screen in quick succession at London's Hammersmith Odeon. The winner of the Best British Band award was about to be announced at the 12th BRITS ceremony. The watching crowd cheered as images of Dire Straits, Queen, James, Pet Shop Boys, Simply Red and The KLF were paraded before them. Who could the winner be?

Guest presenter Martika was on-stage to hail the successful band. "For the first time ever at the BRITS, we have an exact tie and two winners," she announced. "Congratulations, Simply Red and The KLF."

Mick Hucknall wasn't there to accept his award, as Martika went on, "Mick has asked me to say he would accept second place… and Long Live Queen, maaan!" Disconcertingly, The KLF also failed to appear. They had long gone, leaving Hammersmith in their taillights.

The story began unfolding much earlier in the day. Soon after dawn, a van pulled up outside a Northampton slaughterhouse, and a dead sheep was loaded on board be driven to London. So began the diabolic scheme hatched by Bill Drummond and Jimmy Cauty, who, as The KLF, were the biggest-selling band in the world in '91.

Their plan was to totally disrupt the industry's showcase awards ceremony with an act that would stain its name for all eternity. They would dismember the dead sheep on-stage and throw buckets of blood into the stuffed-shirted audience. Not since Terry Southern devised his vat-full of cash and bodily fluids for The Magic Christian movie had anyone come up with such a bumper wheeze. Or so the conspirators thought.



TARTAN TERROR . . . wild Bill's stage a
tics cause a stir Pictures: DAVE HOGA

KLF'S SICK GUN STUNT FAILS TO HIT THE TARGET

THE KLF proved pop's biggest wallies by "firing" a realistic machine gun at the star-studded audience.

Singer Bill Drummond left the stage as the band performed their No 1 hit 3am Eternal.

Drummond, 36, who was using a crutch after damaging his knee in a fall, then reappeared and pointed the gun at the crowd.

But his antics were met with apathy by guests who carried on chatting. KLF did manage to cause a stir eventually by trashing their instruments at the end of their

Thankfully, wiser heads prevailed. When The KLF joined grindcore metallists Extreme Noise Terror to rehearse their version of 3 AM Eternal for the show, BBC lawyers hastily curtailed the bucket of blood plan, claiming that it would undoubtedly lead to serious legal problems. And Extreme Noise Terror proved unhappy about the sheep being disembowelled. Avowed vegetarians, they could hardly be expected to approve The KLF plan of action and threatened to pull out of the performance.

The KLF called them "weeds" and duly opted for an alternative plan. Come the night, Bill Drummond appeared on-stage, wearing a kilt and supported by crutches.

A bizarre but strangely threatening figure, he snarled, "The Justified Ancients Of Mu Mu versus Extreme Noise Terror: this is television freedom," as the joint conspirators launched into the torrent of noise that was 3.AM Eternal. As the audience reeled, Drummond somehow emerged from the on-stage riot of

"THIS IS TELEVISION FREEDOM!"
Bill Drummond

I DIED
FOR YOU
[BON APPETIT]

BRIT-ty vacant: (clockwise from main) Bill Drummond lets off some steam with ENT; The Sun huffs; presenter Martika (with cigarette); the infamous dead sheep.

Credit in here

movement and sound, chomping a cigar and firing what appeared to be an automatic weapon. As the noise riot terminated and the band headed off-stage, the voice of publicist Scott Piering announced, "The KLF have now left the music industry."

Some of the audience were shocked. Sir Georg Solti, the Hungarian conductor who was to present the best classical award, attempted to leave the auditorium and had to be persuaded to return to his seat. Later, The KLF dubbed him "a scaredy cat."

Soon after, in Smash Hits, Drummond and Cauty explained: "We frightened the audience because they thought the machine gun we fired was loaded with bullets. It was only blanks, ha, ha! We left after our bit, and arranged for a motorbike messenger to pick up our award for Best British Group. The Brit's producers, however, wouldn't let him pick it up for us. Pah, foiled!"

But their vengeance wasn't complete. Later that evening, a dead sheep was dumped outside the Royal Lancaster Hotel, where a post-BRITS party was taking place. Tied to the carcass was a message: "I died for you – bon appetit."

The next morning's Sun came with the headline, "KLF's Sick Gun Stunt Fails To Hit The Target", around the time the band were making plans to dump their BRITS award near Stonehenge. Three months later, on May 14, 1992, The KLF announced their retirement from the music industry and the deletion of their back catalogue with the message: "We are at a point where the path is about to take a sharp turn from these sunny uplands down into a netherworld of we know not what."

In 1993 the two founded the K Foundation, who would burn a million pounds on the island of Jura on August 23, 1994. They said they would not speak about the burning for 23 years. The moratorium runs out next year.

Fred Dellar

AD ARCHIVE 1992

Formule B rewrites the future for spots.
FORMULE B

Special dermatological pimple-blasting anti-acne pen will lead to tinkling chuckles with blemish-free partner. Cushty!

NI Syndication, Rex, Photoshot (2), Press Association (2), Camera Press, Alamy

ALSO THIS MONTH

NEVERMIND BACK AT TOP

1 **Nirvana** (above) see their second album return to Number 1 in the US. On February 24 Kurt Cobain will marry Courtney Love on Waikiki Beach, Hawaii.

CHARITABLE JACKO

3 **Michael Jackson**, at a New York press conference announces his Pepsi-sponsored, world tour. "The only reason I'm touring," he says, "is to raise funds for the newly-formed Heal The World Fund, an international children's care cause."

JELLYFISH SPILL OVER

9 Charisma release **Jellyfish's** second album, *Spilt Milk*, in the US. It's said strings, brass, banjos, Theremins, harpsichords and balalaikas feature. Band mainman **Andy Sturmer** assures fans it's a pure rock'n'roll LP.

REMEMBER, GLENN

13 **Glenn Miller**'s family is said to be trying to buy the control tower at disused airfield Twinwoods, Beds where the bandleader was last seen alive. They want to take it back to America.

STONES ON SCREEN

14 **The Rolling Stones**' concert film, At The Max, directed by Julien Temple, premiers in the Britain at Bradford's National Museum of Film & Photography.

BLUE CRÜE

14 Elektra Records' press release on **Mötley Crüe**'s sacking of lead singer **Vince Neil** says: "Racing car driving has become a priority in Vince's life… his bandmates felt that he didn't share their determination and passion for music."

BARBRA REIGNS

22 **Madonna**'s surprise appearance on the Coffee Talk segment of Saturday Night Live is upstaged by **Barbra Streisand** who arrived unannounced to kiss each character, waved to the audience and left.

COLUMBIA
STEREO
5:49
GEORGE MICHAEL
DON'T LET THE SUN GO DOWN ON ME
WITH ELTON JOHN

Solar coasters: Elton and George do their bit; (inset) the single.

ELTON AND GEORGE TOP THE US CHARTS

FEBRUARY 1 George Michael and Elton John's Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me duet, tops the singles chart in the US. The recording, which stems from a Wembley concert of March 23, 1991, provides the seventh US Number 1 for both singers, not including Michael's Wham! successes. Proceeds are split between The London Lighthouse AIDS charity and The Rainbow Trust Children's Charity. On February 8, Band Aid closes its accounts having raised £110 million for famine relief. Says Bob Geldof: "It was only supposed to last seven weeks, but I hadn't counted on the fact that hundreds of millions would respond."

Spiked: Jesus And Mary Chain shown little reverence.

JAMC BANNED BY TOTP

FEBRUARY 22 It is claimed that The Jesus And Mary Chain were barred from Top Of The Pops last week after the lyrics of their Reverence single were deemed unsuitable by the show's producer, Stan Appel. Says a BBC spokesperson: "Our producer felt that the lyric, 'I want to die like Jesus Christ, I want to die on a bed of spikes,' was unsuitable for broadcast at a time when children are most likely to be watching the programme."

TOP TEN

US COUNTRY MUSIC ALBUMS FEBRUARY 15

1 **ROPIN' THE WIND** GARTH BROOKS LIBERTY
2 **NO FENCES** GARTH BROOKS LIBERTY
3 **GARTH BROOKS** GARTH BROOKS LIBERTY
4 **FOR MY BROKEN HEART** REBA McENTIRE MCA
5 **IT'S ALL ABOUT TO CHANGE** TRAVIS TRITT WARNER BROS
6 **POCKET FULL OF GOLD** VINCE GILL MCA
7 **TEN STRAIT HITS** GEORGE STRAIT MCA
8 **ALL I CAN BE** COLLIN RAYE EPIC
9 **TRISHA YEARWOOD** TRISHA YEARWOOD MCA
10 **DON'T ROCK THE JUKEBOX** ALAN JACKSON ARISTA

Trisha: a good Yearwood for sunflowers.

Checkered life: John Bradbury, whose main influences were Al Jackson Jr and Sly Dunbar, enjoying The Specials' reformation.

1953-2015

SOCK IT TO 'EM, J.B.

The Specials' drummer John Bradbury died suddenly on December 28.

When The Specials played their hugely well-received reunion tour in 2009, they opened the show with Do The Dog. The song ridiculed late-'70s internecine violence to a fast-stomping, punks-versus-teds beat, and it was testament to John Bradbury's crucial place in the group that he sounded as fiery and possessed on his Pearl drum kit as he had in 1979, combining punk attack with the rhythmic nuances of reggae and soul. The dates went down a storm.

Born in Coventry in 1953, Bradbury was the ideal man for The Specials' drum-stool. His father Bert was a council decorator while his mother Joan, who worked in the maternity ward at Walsgrave hospital, was a former shop steward with strong anti-racist views. Having received his first set of drums aged eight, Bradbury's sisters would later introduce to him to the Northern soul scene in the Midlands. In the mid '70s he worked at Pete Waterman's Soul Hole shop in Coventry's City Arcade (motto – 'Black Music's Our Bag – Make It Yours').

Another employee of the shop was Tim Strickland, who in 1977 would join keyboardist Jerry Dammers in a group called The Automatics, as vocalist. Strickland would soon be replaced by Terry Hall. Bradbury, who by then had gone to study fine art in Hull and who shared a house with Dammers, would join the ranks for the band's first single Gangsters, whose slinky double A-side, The Selecter, Brad co-wrote with fellow Coventry musician Neol Davies.

After that 45's Top 10 success in June 1979, which spearheaded the short but intense ska boom, the group's ascent was dizzying. The next two years would see seven 45s, including the Number 1 The Special A.K.A. Live! EP, two Top 5 albums and constant touring, increasingly marred by stage invasions. The pressure, they later revealed, was immense, and while their second Number 1 Ghost Town – a chart-topper as cities around Britain erupted in rioting – was possibly their most staggering diagnosis of societal breakdown, the line-up would splinter thereafter.

Bradbury, though, kept faith with Dammers, seeing out the troubled creation of 1984's Special AKA album *In The Studio*, which included the triumphant, Top 10 anti-apartheid anthem Nelson Mandela.

The drummer had concurrently run his soul outfit JB's Allstars, whose 1986 farewell single The Alphabet Army was "dedicated to the overworked, underpaid teachers."

In the years that followed he played with ska super-group The Special Beat and worked in computers, conspicuously absent, like Hall, from the partial Specials reformations other members organised in the '90s and beyond. That changed in 2008 when the classic formation, sadly lacking Dammers, acknowledged the bond between band and fans and returned to contention. They played their last gig in Nottingham in July 2015, and were planning dates, and possibly new recordings, for this year.

When MOJO's Danny Eccleston spoke to Brad in 2009, he talked about his brush with cancer five years previously, the depth of his friendship with Hall, and how the band had matured with their audience.

He also denied that inter-band friction had given them their unique spark, saying, "It was all about the combination of elements, the chemistry. None of that sparked any greater effort or intensity on my part. This is what I was born to do."

He leaves his wife Emily, who he met at The Specials' first London gig at the Electric Ballroom in 1979, and his son Elliott.

Ian Harrison

Rex Features

"THIS IS WHAT I WAS BORN TO DO."

THE LEGACY

Album: *The Specials*, The Specials, 2-Tone, 1979

The Sound: The band's live set, honed for 18 months and produced by Elvis Costello, remains the best way to appreciate Brad's reggae and soul influenced drumming: the adrenalised Concrete Jungle, Nite Klub and Do The Dog contrast with the reflection required by Blank Expression, You're Wondering Now and Doesn't Make It Alright. Farewell, Prince Rimshot.

ROBERT STIGWOOD

MUSIC INDUSTRY SVENGALI

BORN 1934

A music impresario who inhabited the twin worlds of wild showmanship and grand folly, Robert Stigwood was born in Adelaide but moved to England in 1955, eventually establishing the theatrical agency, Robert Stigwood Associates. Inspired by Joe Meek's success with Johnny Remember Me by his client, John Leyton, Stigwood expanded into music, operating as agent, manager, producer, publisher and concert promoter, not always successfully. An attempt to sign the Small Faces in 1966 resulted in a now legendary balcony dangling from Don Arden's heavy friends. However, by 1967 Stigwood was managing Cream and the Bee Gees, co-owned Brian Epstein's NEMS Enterprises and would soon produce such theatrical freak-out successes as Hair and Oh! Calcutta! By the '70s, Stigwood was running his own record label, RSO, and producing smash cinema hits – Tommy, Jesus Christ Superstar, Grease and Saturday Night Fever – and one major disaster, 1978 movie musical Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. He died of a heart attack on January 4, aged 81.

Andrew Male

NATALIE COLE

JAZZ, R&B, SOUL SCION

BORN 1950

Children faltering as they follow a famous parent on a similar career path is a familiar story, but for many years Natalie Cole, a fine soul, jazz and pop singer and daughter of Nat King Cole, bucked the trend. Her debut single, 1975's fizzy This Will Be, and album *Inseparable*, both won Grammys. Never pushed into music, she began singing at a young age, appeared on her father's *The Magic Of Christmas* album in 1960, and on his US TV show, and sang in rock bands and jazz combos. But at 15 she was hit hard by Nat's death. During college she gradually reconnected with music, eventually meeting producers Chuck Jackson and Marvin Yancy, the first of her three husbands. Four more US-charting albums followed but in the '80s drugs took fierce hold. However, at the end of that decade Cole's career revived and in 1991, using a 1961 recording of Unforgettable, she 'duetted' with her late father. It sold over 14 million copies and brought her yet another Grammy. In 2009 she had a liver transplant, but kept working until late last year.

Geoff Brown

Natalie Cole, as unforgettable as her father Nat.

THEY ALSO SERVED

JAZZ PIANIST **PAUL BLEY** (b.1932) was a precocious talent who formed his first band in Montreal, aged 13. Over the ensuing decades he would follow creative impulses that expressed both classic forms and a need to innovate. A fearless and penetrating soloist, he released over 80 solo albums, and experimented with free jazz and synthesizers. Among his collaborators were **Charles Mingus**, **Sonny Rollins**, **Jimmy Giuffre**, **Lester Young**, **Carla Bley**, **Ben Webster**, **Ornette Coleman**, **Chet Baker**, **Annette Peacock**, **Jaco Pastorius** and **Pat Metheny**.

RAVE hypeman **GURU JOSH** (aka Paul Walden, b.1964) released the saxophone-augmented club hit Infinity (1990's… Time For The Guru) in 1989; it soon became a Top 5 success across Europe. The Jersey-born producer explained that he had been converted to house music after being given an ecstasy pill in a pub in Croydon, where he was playing with his band **Joshua Cries Wolf**. Later activity included the audio-visual VHS release Dance In Cyberspace, experiments in glass art and regular performances in Ibiza, where he took his own life on December 28.

REGGAE KEYBOARDIST **GLADSTONE 'GLADDY' ANDERSON** (b.1934) was taught to play by his bandleader uncle **Aubrey Adams.** As a sessioneer from the late '50s on, he would be a constant feature of Jamaica's changing musical landscape, playing for producers including **Duke Reid**, **Sir Coxsone** and **Joe Gibbs**, and appearing on recordings by **Bob Marley**, **Prince Buster**, **The Upsetters**, **Jimmy Cliff** and many others. He also found success in a vocal duo with **Stranger Cole**, recorded several solo LPs, led his own outfit **Gladdy's All-Stars** and played in Channel One studio's house band **Roots Radics**.

RHONDDA VOICE **GARETH 'MORTY' MORTIMER** fronted blues outfit **Ancient Grease** before he and guitarist **Graham Williams** formed pub rockers **Racing Cars** in 1973. The group reached Number 14 in 1977 with West Coast-style ballad They Shoot Horses, Don't They? After that band's split, Morty released his solo album *Love Blind* in 1980, and toured with **John Parr** and **Tina Turner**. **Racing Cars** reformed in 2000, and would release two further albums.

ELECTRONIC PRODUCER **RAINER BLOSS** (b.1946) had his first musical experiences in communist East Germany, initially playing bass and leading his own **Combo**, and later joining **WIR**. In 1978 he defected to West Berlin, and went on to record solo, compose for the stage and make several albums with **Klaus Schulze**. In 1987 he began a long association with synth-poppers **Alphaville**, whose frontman **Marian Gold** paid tribute: "as a musician, he was a giant."

SINGER/DRUMMER **JOHN GARNER** (b.1952) was a member of cult Brooklyn power trio **Sir Lord Baltimore**, whose heavy-s P *Kingdom Come* was posthumously hailed as a lanc proto-metal. After the following year's more sedate self-titled follow-u however, the band were dropped by their label. Garner later worked for the City of New York Department of Sanitation, though in 2006 he and guitarist **Louis Dambra** reunited to release *Sir Lord Baltimore III Raw*, using song ideas from 1976 but with Christian-themed lyrics. He died of liver failure.

STUMP vocalist **MICK LYNCH** (b.1960) fronted the arty-but-always-entertaining Cork quartet as they seared minds across the British Isles with songs including Buffalo (1986) and Charlton Heston (1988). Regrettably they split after '88s sole full-length LP, *A Fierce Pancake*. After Stump, Lynch turned to acting, performed in his satirical one-man show Don For Chickens and founded street theatre group Dowtcha Puppets. The band reformed in 2015 and were booking festival appearances when Lynch fell ill.

'THE PROPHET' of **Parliament**, **Funkadelic** and the **P-Funk All-Stars**, **RON FORD** (b.1948) formed a lasting bond with **George Clinton** at the future Dr Funkenstein's barbershop in Newark. In the '70s and '80s he served as Clinton's "bullshit detector" and advisor, and sang, produced, wrote and played on albums including *Uncle Jam Wants You* and *The Electric Spanking Of War Babies*: he also co-composed the oft-sampled 1983 **P-Funk All-Stars**' banger Pumpin' It Up. After enduring homelessness, he would later rejoin Clinton on stage.

Mick Lynch, Stump's mind-searer.

RADIO PRODUCER **STEWART CRUICKSHANK** (b.1951) brought his expertise to BBC Scotland, and successive generations of bands owe him for their first radio exposure. With indefatigable enthusiasm and an encyclopaedic musical knowledge spanning rock, folk, doo wop and jazz, 'Krunch''s charm skills were such that he once door-stepped **Lou Reed** in New York and returned with seven hours of interview for a Radio 2 documentary.

SOUL VOICE **WILLIAM GUEST** (b.1941) found success with his cousin **Gladys Knight** as a member of her harmonising backing group **The Pips**. The band split in 1989, after 17 Top 20 US singles, including the worldwide hit Midnight Train To Georgia. Afterwards, Guest moved into production and management. He published his memoir, Midnight Train From Georgia: A Pip's Journey, in 2013.

Clive Prior

Alamy, Lebrecht Picture Library, Scope, Tom Sheehan

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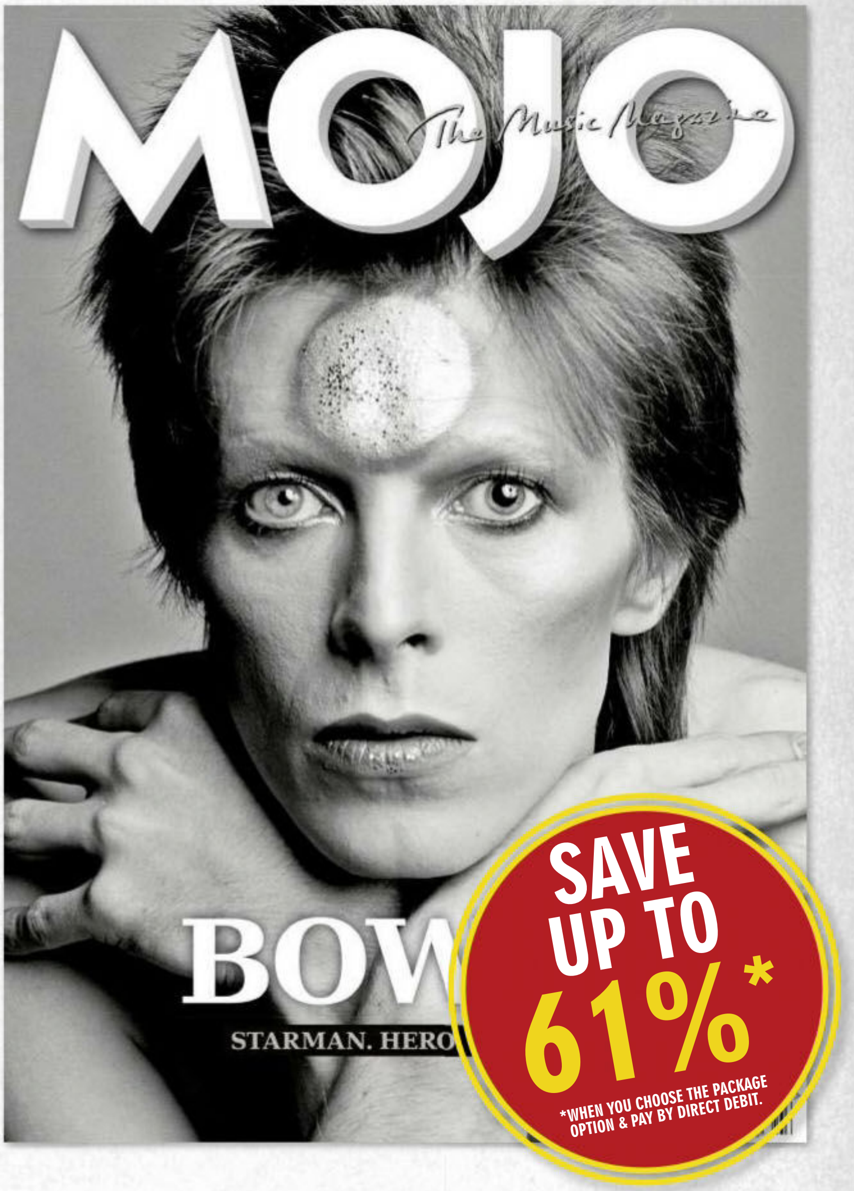
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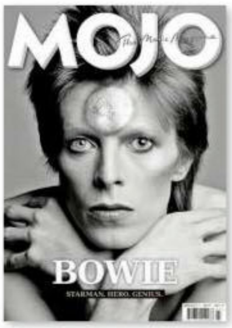

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THE MOJO INTERVIEW

With **Suede** he blazed a trail for **Britpop** before **hard drugs** and callow HR set in. But now band and singer have put **"preening"** aside to tackle life's big questions. **"I have stuff to explore,"** declares Brett Anderson.

Interview by **DANNY ECCLESTON** • Portrait by **MATTIA ZOPPELLARO**

BRETT ANDERSON GLIDES INTO THE WEST London offices of his PR looking immaculate: perfectly pressed black trousers, shiny black pointy boots, slate-grey shirt and 48-year-old hair that, if it has been dyed, has been rendered expensively, unobtrusively. Some people are described as sharp-featured; with its pointy nose and razor cheekbones, the Suede singer's face looks like it could still do you a mischief.

His group are enjoying an unlikely renaissance. Shelved after 2002's malformed *A New Morning* album advised the jig was up for the former Britpop pacemakers, the quintet have been slowly clawing back their reputation, a 2010 reunion tour spawning a fine comeback album, 2013's *Bloodsports*. The latest, *Night Thoughts*, is better still: a satisfying, episodic set that recalls a time when Anderson's vampiric flamboyance drew comparisons with Bryan Ferry and his group's intense, dramatic rock marked them out as a more alert and glamorous alternative to US grunge and UK shoegaze, before the disaffection of gifted guitarist Bernard Butler during the creation of 1994's epic *Dog Man Star* album knocked them down but not quite out.

At a time when British indie was its own soap opera, Suede played their part, with one member – Anderson's girlfriend Justine Frischmann – having already stolen a scene, jilting the cabbie's son from Lindfield, Sussex to take up with Damon Albarn from rivals Blur. By contrast with his heartier proto-Britpop peers, Anderson's combination of coyness and vainglory made him a polarising presence in the mid-'90s music press – drawing flak for lyrics and interviews that played games with sexual politics in an era that was beginning to prefer these things in black or white. Others he alienated with merely a pout or a flick of his floppy fringe ("There was a lot of preening," he now concedes).

The Anderson sitting down with MOJO today claims to be much changed: humbler, more thoughtful. The father of two sons (one three, another, a stepson, 11), he certainly seems more inclined to mock himself or admit fault, in dry M25 tones that make you think of comic Jack Dee until the flash of a wolfish smile reasserts the naughty rockstarness. The boyish quality that faded in the later '90s as an enthusiasm for narcotics led him into addiction to smack and crack and seemed to kill something in his eyes has made a comeback along with his band. Clarity has been restored.

"The reunion shows were really educational for us," reflects Anderson as we settle down to talk. "We had forgotten what we were. It's kind of odd being in a band. It seems so obvious to the fans and to casual observers where you're going wrong. But when you're in the thick of it…"

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WE'RE NOT WORTHY

Mike Joyce nearly joined Suede. He's still a fan.

"I saw their ad for a drummer – 'Smiths-influenced' – and called their manager. I said I sounded like Mike Joyce, but better! I played a bit with them, but said they didn't need The Smiths thing hanging over them. Bernard was an extraordinary guitarist and Brett had this great intensity and desire. I just knew they were going to be successful.

Rex Features

< *Night Thoughts* embraces a later life stage. That always looked likely to be a problem for Suede, because your songs were so dazzled by youth and what it meant to be young…

Yes. A song like So Young [from *Suede*, 1993] is about the joyous ride, the arrogance of youth, and When You Are Young [from *Night Thoughts*] is coming from someone who isn't young any more. Then I Don't Know How To Reach You is almost from my own father's perspective, addressing this fear of losing contact with his son. Parenthood gave me something to access that wasn't this over-Xeroxed version of what Suede songs should be about. It's awakened all these memories, things I haven't thought about for 30, 40 years. Just lifting your kid up under his arms, I felt this ghost doing the same to me.

What kind of relationship did you have with your own father?

That's a pretty huge question (*laughs*). My father was quite an eccentric man. He was a classical music obsessive. He used to drive to Franz Liszt's birthplace every year – Raiding in what's now Austria – pick up a piece of soil and wear it around his neck in a phial. Drove there in his Morris Traveller. It used to rattle the whole time, had mushrooms growing in the woodwork. How he got there and back I have no idea.

When I was little we were close, spent a lot of time together. He was possibly reliving the childhood he never had; his father was a military man, very strict, quite aggressive. But when I became a teenager we clashed. He'd play Wagner, the Ring Cycle, or Hungarian Rhapsody really loud downstairs. Upstairs in my bedroom it would be Crass, Do They Owe Us A Living? If you stood on the stairs there would be this mad hybrid of the two.

Do you remember what the first music was that really entranced you?

The first song I can remember thinking was really beautiful and amazing was Wuthering Heights, Kate Bush. My sister bought the single. I can see the label now: the big red EMI on the orange background. After that it was the Sex Pistols – which felt like my own thing. Growing up in the suburbs, these things take longer to filter through, and by the time I'd actually heard them they'd been and gone. It's like receiving the light from a dead star.

Why the Pistols?

The songs are great – it's a simple as that. The iconoclasm of the Pistols was important of course, but they've survived because the songs are fucking brilliant. John Lydon's a genius. He sounds like a Dalek, it shouldn't work, but it does. They're still probably the greatest band ever. Later, The Smiths were massively, hugely important, and still are, for me. I loved that the songs were about weakness as a strength. It was an inversion of rock cliché. It could be attractive and sexy to be poor and weak.

The ad you eventually placed for a guitarist that Bernard Butler answered mentioned The Smiths, Lloyd Cole And The Commotions…

…Pet Shop Boys and Bowie. And we said something like "no musos, no beginners". Because we knew we'd end up with a bunch of guys in sleeveless T-shirts – the Denmark Street brigade. We wanted to imply that we weren't that sort of band. Bernard said he'd been scouring the music press for years and that was the first time he'd wanted to reply to anything. Lucky he did. He was heaven sent.

What were your first impressions of him?

Very quiet. Very young. He was either late teens or very early twenties. From a very different background. I had a flat in Highlever Road, North Kensington, where we'd rehearse, if you could call it that – me and Justine [Frischmann] and Mat [Osman]. We used to call ourselves The Perfect. It was a bit Lilac Time-y – all part of the development! We were quite confident, university backgrounds, and even though I was from a council house, I suppose you could call me aspirational middle-class. Then there was Justine's wealthy background. Bernard was very London, Catholic working-class, a different sort of kid. But obviously incredibly talented. A wonderkid.

Bernard's playing freed Suede. The arpeggios, the flighty stuff… It wasn't earthbound. No one else sounded like that.

No one else *could* sound like that. No one could really play like Bernard. The complexity of what he could do – sometimes I struggled to get my head around it. It would frustrate me even, but I suppose in turn he learned to simplify what he did a little bit. But where he would go with the chords would be extraordinary.

What turned Suede from one of a million bedroom bands into a group that could achieve something?

The key thing was Justine leaving the band – that was the 'before and after' moment. Even though a lot of those early songs came towards the end of her time in the band – like To The Birds and The Drowners – her leaving allowed everything to fall into place. She was very influential on us as a tastemaker – it was almost her main job in the band – but she wasn't exactly essential as a musician, although she went on to do something amazing with Elastica. Mainly, she didn't like a lot of the songs I loved. Bernard and I wrote Moving and Pantomime Horse on the same day, and we played both to her, and she loved Moving and hated Pantomime Horse, and I'm like, "But this is the kind of song I want to write! If you don't like this, maybe you shouldn't be in the band." "Well, maybe I shouldn't…"

You'd split as a couple before she left the band. Were a lot of those early Suede songs about that?

A LIFE IN PICTURES

The Brett pack: Anderson's images.

1 So young: Brett turns out for the school team (back row, second left).

2 New generation: classic early Suede (from left) Simon Gilbert, Anderson, Bernard Butler, Mat Osman.

3 The big time: Brett on tour in Scotland, 1992. "We were partying every night."

4 Anderson as Sid Vicious, 1992: "The Sex Pistols are probably the greatest band ever."

5 Cover star in 1993: "Oo-er! He's singing about sex! The reaction was quite prudish."

6 "Fuck, that's what I should be doing": Anderson, reunited with guitarist Bernard Butler in The Tears, London, May 2, 2005.

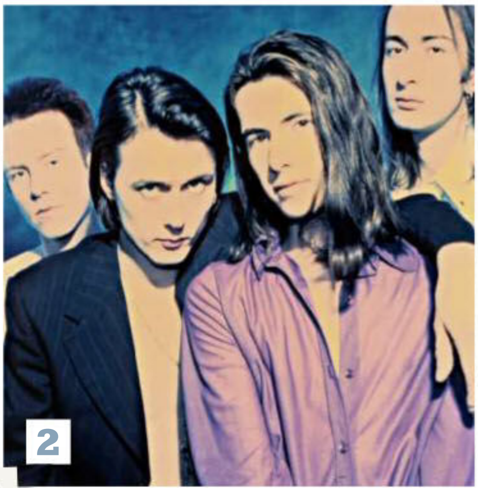
7 Brett meets Bowie, March 20, 1993: Anderson had referenced the Dame – and Pet Shop Boys and The Smiths – in his ad for a guitarist to join Suede.

8 Headcase: Anderson at the press conference to launch 1999's *Head Music*. "I was very, very at the edge."

9 "I wanted to be in a rock band again": resurgent Brett with Mani (centre) and Bobby Gillespie, 2012.

10 "Success, money, drugs, they test you in the extreme": Anderson in 1993, about to sit his examination.

Getty Images, Photoshot (2), Alamy, Pennie Smith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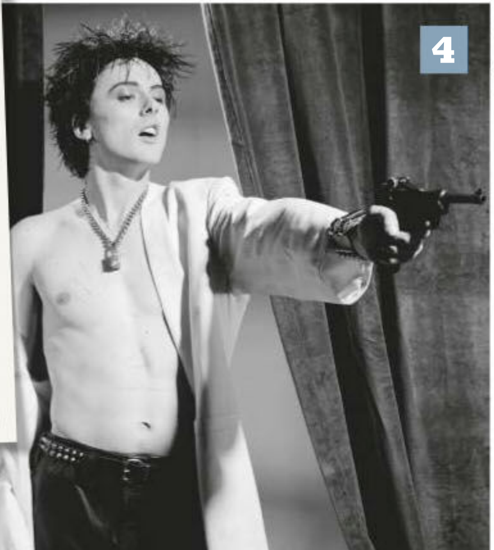
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EXCLUSIVE SMITHS INTERVIEW! At last, the untold tales of Rourke & Joyce…
SELECT
POP BABYLON!
FREE
SIX massive (3ft x 2ft) FLYPOSTERS
suede
Yanks go home!
SUEDE
St ETIENNE, DENIM, PULP, THE AUTEURS and the Battle for Britain
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Absolutely, yes. There are many, many songs about Justine. Possibly all of them (*laughs*). Well, the first album especially, and the B-sides. When you're in a relationship you're… not *numbed* exactly, but life's easy, isn't it? Splitting up with her gave me an edge as a writer because I suddenly felt I was back in the shit again. I'd come from the shit and I was plonked back in it. But it gave me something to write about – the loss of something. Romantic loss – when you're in your twenties there's no greater loss; there's little sense yet that there are other, possibly worse ways to lose people.

Writing about sex was part of what was unique about Suede and was inevitably one of the things that were picked up on… Did it occur to you that your lyrics would be pulled apart like that?

No, I don't suppose it did. I was taken aback by the response, which was quite prudish in some quarters: 'Oo-er! He's singing about sex!' Did I just wander into a WI meeting or something? One of the things I was doing as a writer, which was where people decided to mistrust me, was inhabiting different personas. So when I sang about "he", it was possibly me singing as a woman singing about *me* – which is what My Insatiable One is. For me that's what created the frisson, that was exciting for me. But it got me in trouble later…

The line that's always quoted back at you is "I'm a bisexual who's never had a homosexual experience…"

Yeah, the line that will be written on my tombstone. Oh, God…

Losing your mother in 1989 must have been very upsetting, but do you think it freed you to write about things that you would have thought twice about before?

That's a point I have ruminated on. 'One's mother' is always a presence, isn't she? The fact that she wasn't around, I did feel that I didn't have any boundaries about what I could talk about, what I could write about, how far I could push these things.

The first album was a big success – Mercury Prize winner, fastest-selling album by a British band to that date – but Suede quickly appeared to want to go further, and *Dog Man Star* seemed to be all about that. It was extraordinary, but also cataclysmic in terms of the story of the band. How soon was the rift with Bernard visible?

It was clear from the start that he was a different breed. The potential for schism was always there and perhaps the fault line had been papered over. As the band developed and the camaraderie in the group developed, I kind of ignored that schism. But success, money, drugs, touring, they test you, test you in the extreme. Touring America was a big thing – a big test. We were partying every night. No idea how to tour without virtually killing ourselves. It was on that tour that Bernard started to drift away. The rest of us were enjoying being in America, enjoying being in a band. But it was very painful for Bernard, at a time when he had a lot of personal stuff to deal with – his father was dying – and by the time we got back to start making *Dog Man Star*, he was travelling separately. We cancelled a load of dates at the end of the tour because frankly it was a fucking nightmare. We had to go home or the band was going to explode.

> "**Splitting up** with **Justine** gave me an **edge as a writer**. I was back in the **shit** again."

Could it have been salvaged?

Yes. I think it could have been. It's probably my biggest regret in life that I didn't try harder to salvage it. It's the stupidest thing that I will ever do, because the relationship between me and him was something special, and with all due respect to everyone I've worked with since it was a special partnership and we made some pretty special music. But at the time I didn't know how to fucking do it. I didn't know how to reach him. And I was sick of it, I was fucking sick of it. The whole experience was unpleasant and part of me just couldn't be bothered any more. It was like, For fuck's sake, if you don't want to be in this band then don't be in this band.

The day after he was gone, how scared were you about the future?

Bizarrely enough, I didn't have that panic. There was even a bit of relief. I was glad that this dark, dark time was over. I think we were very confident – a confidence bordering on arrogance that I've had throughout my life. Looking back, it's completely misplaced. Just like the whole idea of becoming a musician in the first place. It's sort of ridiculous, I know, but I thought we'd find a way.

Are you just not someone who doubts himself?

I am now. But in my twenties, no, I wasn't. There's been a lot of self-reflection since then; I am a very different person now. I look back on that person… It's like, in your twenties you ➢

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No dead end: *"Night Thoughts* feels like a point on the path to somewhere – I have no idea where." Brett Anderson, looking for the right direction, London, December 2015.

"I didn't know **how to reach Bernard**. I didn't know how to fucking do it. **And I was sick of it."**

< think you're going to live forever, don't you? There's this *concept* of death, but it's like, that's what happens to other people.

Finding Richard Oakes saved the band, but it can't have been easy for him. In early interviews he seemed quite nervous about what he'd let himself in for…

…And I don't blame him. I'm amazed that he dealt with it in the way that he did.

Was that transition well managed?

Yeah, I think so. Looking back it was a very brave, possibly stupid decision to choose someone so young, but at the time it didn't seem important. His musicianship was all that mattered, but he was rather thrown into the fire. Recently he said that joining Suede was simultaneously the best thing and the worst thing that ever happened to him. It was perfectly put. It's not an opportunity you could turn down, but at the same time it tore his life apart. I'm amazed he's not a more unbalanced human being after going through that.

Between *Dog Man Star* and *Coming Up* you missed out 1995: Britpop's cash-in year. It must have been frustrating, but in hindsight, not a bad year to be hunkered down?

I agree. I didn't want to be part of all that. I thought it was very ugly and I think hardly any of the music made that year has any worth. There's a lot of awful, awful, quite cynical music that was made that year. I remember we toured Europe and took Manic Street Preachers with us as a support band, and we felt like deposed kings (*laughs*) living in exile, in Cologne…

***Coming Up* was a powerful vindication. Were you making a conscious attempt to reclaim lost ground?**

Oh God, absolutely. I was very conscious that having a new guitarist playing Bernard's lines wasn't a comeback gesture. It was a struggling-on gesture. So it was essential that we wrote a new album and I wanted it to be a bright pop record.

Dog Man Star was such a dank, overwhelming experience – I don't think I could possibly have made another record like that straight away – and for everything I've said about Britpop I'd be a liar if I said the *Zeitgeist* wasn't somehow seeping into me. It was an exciting time and [multi-instrumentalist] Neil [Codling] joined and the dynamics changed and it felt like a very different band, and obviously *that* band is still around today.

After *Coming Up* the drug use spiralled, and you got into the hard stuff – heroin and crack cocaine. You've said in the past that you almost saw it as part of the mission – to explore the far reaches and open up some doors… Did it?

I don't know. I often wonder if Suede's music would have been better or worse without drug-taking. It's a massive question. The father in me says that it would have been much better if I *hadn't* taken drugs. But a little bit of me… I sort of viewed my life as an experiment – an experiment in order to write songs. I'd go through any emotional situation to sort of drag that out of myself. So it didn't matter to me whether I was happy or well or in love or healthy or any of those things.

But the experiment went too far…

…It went too far, and turned into something that wasn't recreational. It was… a drift into hell. And it massively affected the records. *Head Music* directly – because 1998, when I was writing it, was the darkest time for me as a drug user, when I was very, very at the edge – and *A New Morning*, in that I'd given up drugs by that point but I was still in that place where my judgment was really skewed. I was confused about what record we were making.

Mattia Zoppellaro

I wanted it to be heartfelt, unpretentious, but it ended up sounding like a bunch of demos.

How much did you endanger yourself? How close did you come to clocking off?

Very, very close. I'm lucky to be here I think. And I'm still worried about the consequences – what it's done to my body. There's a voice in the back of your head saying, You shouldn't be doing this. But it's a small voice, and you silence it. Then it gets louder and louder and louder and louder and suddenly you have a moment when you wake up and you're at a crossroads.

What was your moment?

(*Pained*) Oh God… It's horrific. Look, I don't want to talk about that actually. Sorry. I can't go there.

OK. But can I say that as a fan it was disappointing to see the bands of that scene fall into that trap? Heroin nearly destroyed Suede, Pulp, Elastica… It was like a kind of plague.

It's funny how [hard drugs] grow and establish themselves. When the whole Britpop thing started you'd have never thought that it was going to become druggy. It felt ideologically opposed to those kinds of rock'n'roll clichés, but it's like the clichés just… bled through. But you're right, it did kind of kill the whole thing. But maybe the whole thing needed to be killed.

How much was Neil Codling's illness [myalgic encephalomyelitis]a part of Suede's late-'90s malaise?

A big part of that downward spiral. Neil had been so much part of *Coming Up*, his persona as much as his musicianship, and *Head Music* was supposed to be a keyboard record – that had the consequence of making Richard feel sidelined, which I also regret. But suddenly Neil announced that he was very ill and couldn't really engage with the record. That threw another element in with the drugs. A cocktail of bad… luck.

You struggled to sympathise, initially…

I did. It was a strange thing. ME is a complex condition. There's a discussion as to how much of it is psychosomatic. But when you're in a band there's a lot of pulling your socks up and just doing it. There's a lot of dull grind and there's a bit of me, the bandleader, who just wanted him to get on with it, and yeah, I suppose I wasn't as sympathetic as I could have been. I probably didn't deal with it right. But Neil leaving the band was a very, very hard thing to happen. I remember when he left, it felt very bleak, and the loss of that band identity carried over into *A New Morning* and how we fell apart.

You called time on Suede after *A New Morning*. Did you think that that was it?

Yes. I really did. I couldn't see a way back into Suede at all and I kinda didn't want to go there. There was no long-term plan to reform the band. *A New Morning* was such a disappointment to me on so many levels, especially as a writer. How had I got myself into a position where I allowed myself to release this? How has this happened?

You went back to Bernard Butler to do The Tears record…

At the end of that period with Suede I was unhappy, watching it fall apart, and looking back to the time with Bernard thinking, "Fuck, that's what I should be doing." It sounds disrespectful to Suede, I know. It's like a relationship, isn't it? I'd expected Suede to come to an end for a while, but I hadn't sat down with the band and told them until quite late on. I'd already gone through my period of mourning. So calling Bernard wasn't me *immediately* jumping into bed with an old flame.

What had to be said between the two of you to make that possible? Did you rake over the old ground?

No. I didn't want to do that. I didn't want to start this process of apologising for things I'd said in interviews – where do you end with all that? So we drew an imaginary line and said, That's in the past. We both acted like dicks, let's see what we can do now. And that whole period was really lovely – we were mates again. It was 2004 and I'd go up to Bernard's house and sit and write and hang out, go out for sandwiches and wander around Crouch End. It was lovely. A bit like being in early Suede. All the bullshit was put over there.

Did you hope that would carry on?

I did at the time. I'm not sure what didn't work out about it. I think there are some good songs on that record, but I don't think I quite stepped up. Some of the lyrics are a bit lazy. I was slightly over-deliberately *not* writing about the kinds of things I was writing about in early Suede.

A LITTLE NIGHTMUSIC

Three faces of Anderson, by **Danny Eccleston.**

THE DAY JOB

Suede
Dog Man Star
NUDE, 1994
★★★★

Suede's finest, most ambitious album indulged their epic instincts, but it didn't go far enough for guitarist Bernard Butler, whose Eddie Hazel reprise on The Asphalt World shows where his whims may have led, while the more succinct melancholy of The Wild Ones is Suede at their very best. Butler didn't make it to the end of recording, leaving the rest of the group to soldier on.

BACK TO BERNARD

The Tears
Here Come The Tears
INDEPENDIENTE, 2005
★★★

You can't go home again? Flying into the arms of Bernard Butler after the demise of Suede, Anderson argued otherwise via the soaring pop of Autograph. Butler's Spectorian surges and melodic abandon take regular flight but Anderson often sounds like he's holding back. "When we're together, the world smiles," he sings on Co-star. However, *staying* together again proved much harder.

THE SOLO SELECTION

Brett Anderson
Slow Attack
BA SONGS, 2009
★★★★

Eno mucker Leo Abrahams provides sparse, modal arrangements (lots of piano and wind instruments) on Anderson's third (and best) solo album, a self-conscious trip into a zone once inhabited by Mark Hollis of Talk Talk. On songs inspired by environments as much as events, and pushing his voice to the place where beauty and sadness cosy up, Anderson delivers what amounts to a great winter album.

You were de-Suedeing…

A little bit. I was avoiding the murky side, still a bit in the *New Morning* phase. There are some good melodies. Autograph is a good song. Apollo 13 is a good song. Bernard's playing was great and his ideas were really cool. I don't really know what happened. We started writing another couple of things but I don't really feel like *he* wanted to make another record…

Didn't you schedule some shows, then cancel them?

(*Slyly amused*) Yeah, we did.

Was that about somebody not wanting to play those shows?

Yeah. It was about somebody not wanting to play those shows.

Groundhog day?

Kind of. We didn't do the dates and it kind of fizzled out. Not that we were very clear on where to take the second album… I think to an extent we were still chasing the chart, and chasing the media on that record. I suppose I was still living a bit in the '90s. The Tears was trying to be too poppy, not pushing it left-field enough.

Between 2007 and 2011 you made four solo albums. Is it fanciful to suggest you couldn't have made *Bloodsports* and *Night Thoughts* without going through that process?

I'm actually really proud of the solo albums. There's a massive development. The first one [*Brett Anderson*] is kind of flawed, actually very flawed, maybe two good moments. I like what we did with *Wilderness*, really stripping it back. And *Slow Attack* is a fine record, I think. That was me saying I could make good records again, and that led to *Black Rainbows*. Both of those I made with Leo Abrahams, who's an amazing musician. The plan was to make five solo albums – not sure what happened to that.

What needed to happen between the members of Suede for you to make *Bloodsports*?

Just the touring and playing together. Going into the studio without that would have been a disaster. We needed to play all those old songs and let them seep back into us. Breathe in and breathe out, and remember what we were good at. I wanted to be in a rock band again. I'd missed that. It was nice making the solo records, but it was quite lonely. I didn't really like being the boss on the tour bus. Maybe that doesn't fit with the clichéd persona or whatever but I don't particularly like being the alpha male. I like the equality of bands.

What do you think your clichéd persona is?

Well I *know* what it is, because there was a Twitter impersonator [@reallybanderson] who kind of nailed it: this vain, preening twat… which is probably what most people think I am.

Is it utterly without foundation?

Well they say there's no smoke without flames (*laughs*).

Where do Suede go next?

I'd like to make another record. I think I have stuff to explore, which is exciting at this stage in my life. *Night Thoughts* feels like a point on the path – the path to somewhere. I have no fucking idea where.

"I wanna be Matisse or Picasso, guys who made incredibly vibrant work into their seventies or eighties": Matthew E. White at the Robert E. Lee Memorial Bridge, Richmond, Virginia, Monday, December 7, 2015.

RAISED BY CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES, SCHOOLED IN DOWNTOWN NEW YORK JAZZ, IMMERSED IN BLACK AMERICAN MUSIC, **MATTHEW E. WHITE** MAKES RICH, DEEP MODERN SOUL ALBUMS INFUSED WITH PASSION AND A CONFESSIONAL HONESTY. **SOPHIE HARRIS** VISITED IN HIS RICHMOND HOME AND STUDIO TO MEET THE BIG MAN HIMSELF. PORTRAIT BY **GUY EPPEL**

AMERICAN ULTRA

A SMALL RABBIT HOPS AROUND MATTHEW E. WHITE'S sitting room in Richmond, Virginia, while its owner makes tea in the kitchen. With White humming softly to himself, MOJO peruses the bookshelves, inspecting biographies of William Eggleston and Robert Wyatt, books with titles like Learning By Heart, and Always Magic In The Air, yards of albums, and a papier-mâché sculpture of wrestlers – one holding the other in the air for a slam – made by a local veteran soldier. Covering the couch is a traditional, hand-stitched American quilt, decorated with hexagons containing silhouettes of African heads. Hung over the fireplace are two Christmas stockings facing each other; one White's, the other his wife's.

Meanwhile, in the next room (sectioned off from the house bunny's gnawing teeth) is a small home-recording studio housing a handsome Hammond organ. A large portrait of George Washington is mounted over the mixing console, which has been dubbed by White as 'Valley Forge', after the American Revolutionary War military camp.

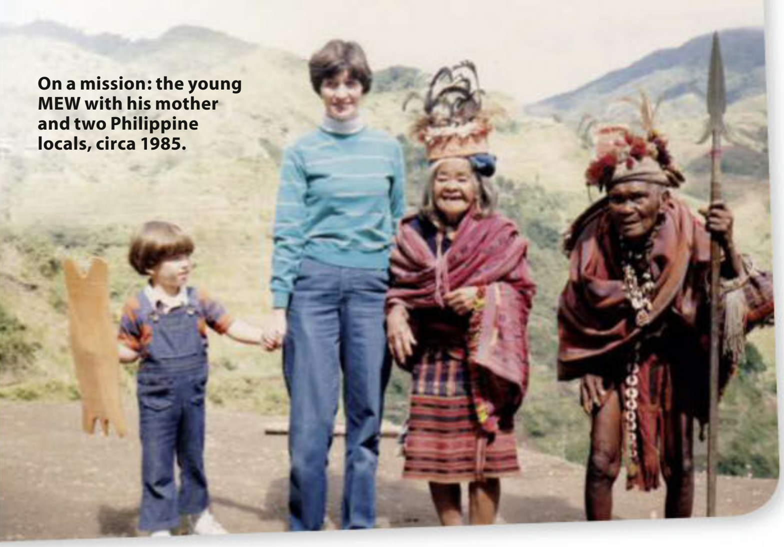
This mix of art curios and American ephemera is, of course, neatly analogous to White's music, as showcased on his two lauded albums, 2012's *Big Inner* and last year's *Fresh Blood*, a singular mix of golden-era soul, gospel, R&B and hip hop studio wizardry, and deep, heartfelt lyrics that get to grips with grand ideas of America itself. Both long-players were initially released on Spacebomb, the record label – plus affiliated studio and house-band – in nearby downtown Richmond that White created and now co-runs with a team of friends.

Our host strolls back into the sitting room with two teas, towering six-foot-something over Wendy, his house rabbit. In person, his dark mane tied back in a bun, he's far from portly (as some articles have suggested), just massively, gigantically tall. "Let's go!" he says, and settles himself on the sofa with an enthusiasm that belies the fact that he hasn't had a proper break from writing, recording and touring in the past four years.

"This stuff gives me energy as well as takes it away," he explains, his voice low, rich and just a little husky. There's a Southern roundness to his vowels, and he laughs a lot, only turning quiet when discussing a life-changing event, or musicians he deeply loves. "I enjoy touring, I enjoy meeting people," he says, of his capacity to work. "I enjoy hosting a party every night." This much is evident to anyone who's ever been at one of White's ecstatic live shows. "And I have a strong home environment. I have a lot of friends, Spacebomb is based here, and I just got married, so that's been really good."

By his own admission, White is very much an Alpha personality ("Strong Leo," he says, grinning), who enjoys leading a team – has done since his sporting days at school – and the success of Spacebomb is firmly grounded in a combination of artistic vision and team management. White found the success of *Big Inner* hard to process, yet he only took a month off between promoting that album and starting work on *Fresh Blood*. Comfortable with his new label and the possibilities of the Spacebomb studio, ill at ease with the concept of relaxing, he was eager to best his debut while still 'in the zone'.

"I've never experienced a lack of ideas," he explains. "Basically, I want to do everything but at the same time do nothing." Nonetheless, the rapid start on *Fresh Blood* was also because White needed to quickly process some deeply significant events in his personal life, events he's not really talked about, until now. ➢



On a mission: the young MEW with his mother and two Philippine locals, circa 1985.

JUST LIKE ALL US STATES, VIRGINIA HAS A MOTTO. You see it running along the bottom of car licence plates and emblazoned on airport T-shirts: “Virginia is for lovers.” It's cute and a little corny, but also pleasingly fitting for a romantic soul like White, who celebrates his half-birthday every Valentine's Day. Appropriately, one of the most striking aspects of *Fresh Blood* is that it's such a sexy album, righteously carnal in the vein of '70s Al Green, or anyone who ever sang about being in love with someone as a turn-on in and of itself, someone who can completely convince when singing a line like “Let me look at you/Oh! I'm pumpin' fresh blood for ya.”

That song, Take Care My Baby, is, says White, the best song he's ever written, a mix of doo wop and Brill Building stylings with soulful horns, Philly strings, and a crisp, whispered vocal that feels simultaneously intimate, confessional and seductive.

“This shit is *wild*-sounding and completely new, but it's still in a tradition,” beams White. It is, he says, an indicator of where he wants to go next with his songwriting. It's also the result of what the musician describes as “a *very* intense romantic situation”. While touring *Big Inner*, White fell in love with another woman, and split with his then girlfriend.

“Almost every song on *Fresh Blood* is about that,” he explains. “I broke that off, got back together with my girlfriend, she became my fiancée, now she's my wife.”

White's domestic happiness today is obvious, but what happened sheds a light, of sorts, on his particular songwriting process. “When I write there's no rules about what I can and can't write about,” he says. White managed to avoid talking about the love affair in interviews while touring *Fresh Blood*, largely due to the fact that journalists were keener to discuss songs such as Tranquility, penned for Philip Seymour Hoffman, Circle Round The Sun, written for a friend's mother's suicide, and Holy Moly, about sexual abuse within the church.

It's not surprising listeners were curious about Holy Moly. White's parents are Christian missionaries, and *Big Inner* had its share of Christian references, most notably the coda to Brazos, the Jorge Ben quote, “Jesus Christ is my Lord, Jesus Christ is my friend”. Plus, says White, “I'm on the [sleeve] in a white suit, and I'm from Virginia, and [I] sort of look like Charles Manson: ‘It's this weirdo psychedelic evangelical from the South!'”

White says he is not a Christian, but still, Holy Moly plays from such a personal place. “I've shied away from talking about it,” White says, of the song's origin. “That happened in my church at home, to nine boys who were in my youth group. One of my best friends at the time, he was our youth leader and perpetrator and he went to jail for multiple years for it. That was real to the core of my understanding of church and authority. That was a big fucking deal to everyone that went through that down there. I needed to write a song about it and so I wrote a song about it.”

White does, incidentally, believe in God.

“It's important to know that you're a small part of a big thing, that this time on Earth doesn't revolve around you.” He recalls a remark NYC icon John Lurie made, “‘There's something going on, we don't know what it is, let's all just agree to love each other as best we can and not think about it any more.'”

> “WHAT'S ROCK'N'ROLL? FUCKIN' DAVE GROHL. OR BONO. OR QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE. A COPY OF A COPY OF A COPY.”

MATTHEW EDGAR WHITE WAS BORN IN VIRGINIA BEACH in 1982; he was two-and-a-half years old when his family relocated to the Philippines on the mission fields, where they stayed until Matt was seven. “I was very happy,” he says. “I was fun, and I've been that my whole life.” White remembers days lying sprawled on his parents' yellow couch listening to his two cassettes, a Beach Boys and a Chuck Berry greatest hits. “My parents would leave and I would just fucking *blast* that music loud, running around the house singing it. I remember thinking, Man, there's nothing better than this. If you could do this for a living this would be fucking incredible.”

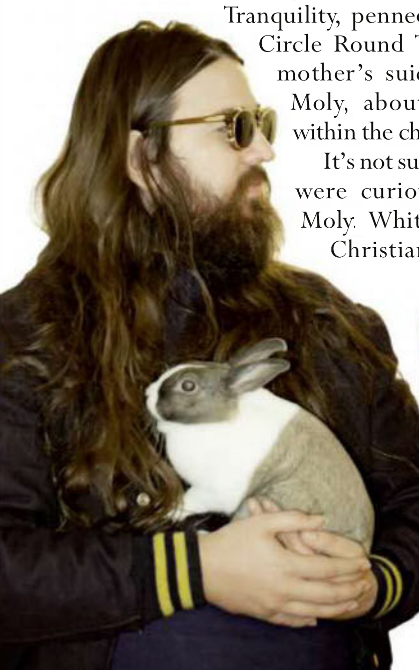
Returning to the US in 1995 after years of living abroad, White felt special, an exotic outsider, yet still firmly American. His understanding of what made the country unique seemed clear.

“What makes America special is, like everything else, what makes it terrifying,” he explains. “An overconfidence, hyper-independence, a sense of ‘We can do anything', a sort of outlaw nature, revolutionary culture. Donald Trump is about as American as it gets, the nasty child of the worst parts of America and capitalism.” That comprehension of what makes America so singular is there in White's approach to his music as well. “You take everything from when the United States started to create things that were its own,” White explains. “From blues, gospel, jazz … Early R&B music, rock'n'roll, soul, hip hop, country. You take all of that, and see it as *one thing*, one idea, one American piece of work.”

After learning drums as a kid and guitar as a teen, White decided to go to jazz school. He dove into New York's downtown scene, inspired by the likes of Lurie, John Zorn, Marc Ribot and the trumpeter and arranger Steven Bernstein, whom White regards as “as important a musician in this country as anybody who's alive right now. A fuckin' genius.”

The 20-year-old White e-mailed Bernstein's record company to ask if he'd be interested in giving a lesson in arrangement. Bernstein supplied his phone number, White called. He duly drove to NYC to meet Bernstein for an hour's lesson that started at 11am and ended at 9pm.

“That day changed my life,” says White, of a listening session that “connect[ed] the dots between spirituals and slave songs, New Orleans jazz and blues, Allen Toussaint and Elvis Presley, The Beach Boys and Stevie Wonder, The Beatles and all that LA Phil Spector shit. [Steven] just opened my eyes to the ability to



MATTHEW E. WHITE
FRESH BLOOD
MATTHEW E. WHITE
BIG INNER

White space: Matthew cradles Wendy; the albums so far.

Guy Eppel (2), courtesy of Matthew E. White

be a well-schooled, well-educated, skilful craft-oriented musician."

It was Bernstein who gave White his "one idea" principle. What, then, did he subsequently make of White's first album? "He loved it," says White, with a huge smile. "He said he was pissed because he taught me everything he knew and now I was making money off it."

White, however, is serious about paying his dues. "I'm inspired by African-American music," he says, "and I'm comfortable being transparent with that, *especially* as a white artist making a living off of a tradition that comes from African-Americans who did not get what they were due. African-American music from the South changed the world. It's the driving force in American culture. It's changed *everything*. Everything you hear on the radio is basically from Southern American slave music. I think people would disagree with me on that, but I think I'm right."

Are you starting to get a better idea of where White's big hit, Rock And Roll Is Cold, might be coming from? White laughs. He's grown weary of talking about that song. It's a *funny* song, he says, and highly self-aware, yet written in about 10 minutes with his pal Andy C. Jenkins.

"Rock'n'roll is a carbon copy of R&B that has floated off on its own ego balloon and gotten drunk and made a fool of itself as it's gotten older," he explains. "What's rock'n'roll? Fuckin' Dave Grohl. Or Bono. Or Queens Of The Stone Age. A copy of a copy of a copy. I think rock'n'roll has aged with a giant sense of ego that's slightly misplaced. It enabled a reset [but] we've been living off that reset since 1955. It's important to be aware of where it may be happening and *not* happening, and it's definitely not happening in big industry rock'n'roll. That's not where the reset's coming from. I guarantee you."

WE ARRIVE AT THE SPACEBOMB RECORDING STUDIO, A stone's throw from the James River, an hour before the team's annual general meeting. It's a sign of how well the company is doing, as White points out, to even have an AGM – though because it's Spacebomb, and Spacebomb's employees are all buddies who had day-jobs when the company started out, the meeting starts at 9pm. The studio itself is a cool, immaculate, faintly retro space; diminutive, too, so it's hard to believe entire string sections and brass ensembles fit in here, but they have, most notably for White's two albums and Natalie Prass's debut.

Spacebomb was founded by White with investment from a lawyer friend and gambling type who "likes adventure", and *Big Inner* was an experiment in possibility; finding out what Spacebomb could achieve as a sound, a studio, a record label. Asked how he feels about being portrayed as a studio auteur, White says, "I think that's sort of the goal, really [but] I don't think I'm as good as I get credit for sometimes. Phil Spector couldn't play anything [but] he knew who was good at what, and he assigned them a job. Together they made something under Phil Spector's name that was bigger than he could make on his own. That's exactly what Kendrick [Lamar] does, assembling a team and letting people be good at what they're good at."

Spacebomb's first four years have been an exponential learning curve for White and crew. As for what it's taught him, he says "don't let the arrangements come before the songs, don't let the idea come before what you're actually listening to, [and] if it sounds good coming out of the speakers, it's fucking good."

In keeping with his giant frame and soft voice, White's ambitions are on a grand scale, yet expressed quietly and simply. "I wanna make a record that nobody's ever heard before," he says. "That's Good Vibrations, that's aggressively imaginative and courageous and new to people's ears. I wanna be Matisse or Picasso, guys [who] made incredibly vibrant work into their seventies and eighties."

From the couch in the control room, White surveys his studio with satisfaction. Yes, MOJO thinks, one *can* picture White years from now, silver-bearded, overseeing fantastical musical projects – like Matisse in the famous photograph of the septuagenarian artist gazing intently at a canvas, holding a paintbrush attached to a long bamboo pole. Getting the big picture, working for the joy of it. "There's this great, *great* Indonesian Balinese saying," he adds, in conclusion. "There is no art, we just do everything the best we can."

Matthew E. White in his home studio, watched over by George Washington; (bottom, from left) Howard, Prass, Westerlund.

THE BOMB SQUAD

Three other grateful beneficiaries of MATTHEW E. WHITE's Spacebomb sound. By CLIVE PRIOR

IVAN HOWARD

When he's not singing with The Rosebuds, or playing with soft rock supergroup Gayngs, Ivan Howard can be found operating as Howard Ivans, creating smooth Rick James funk and lush "quiet storm" R&B jams with White and his Spacebomb Orchestra. It's said the plan is to transform the Howard Ivans project into a stage musical, or at least a proper, full Howard Ivans LP.

Essential purchase: *Red Faced Boy b/w Pillows* (SPACEBOMB, 2013)

JOE WESTERLUND

Drummer for Megafaun, Califone and Mount Moriah, LA-based composer Westerlund is at his most experimental on Spacebomb project Grandma Sparrow & His Piddletractor Orchestra, "psychedelic children's song-cycle for adults" that suggests what might have happened if Brian Wilson had hired Zappa and Varèse to oversee production of *Smile*.

Essential purchase: *Grandma Sparrow & His Piddletractor Orchestra* (SPACEBOMB, 2014)

NATALIE PRASS

White's childhood friend, and former high-school bandmate, this 29-year-old Richmond resident, and Berklee School of Music graduate, was a Nashville backing singer and keyboardist for Jenny Lewis's touring band, before recording her first LP at Spacebomb. Drawing from the same classic American music as White, Prass hones a sound between Nashville country-pop, Dusty's blue-eyed soul, and the melancholy torch songs of The Great American Songbook.

Essential purchase: *Natalie Prass* (SPACEBOMB/CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL, 2015)

Let the heartaches begin: Long John Baldry faces transport challenge, 1967.

MOSS BROS
MLD 145D

LFI/Photoshot

THE TALL GUY

LONG JOHN BALDRY revolutionised 60s British blues, influenced The Rolling Stones, Small Faces, Eric Clapton, Fleetwood Mac and The Beatles, discovered Rod Stewart and quite possibly saved Elton John's life. So why isn't he better known today? **PAUL MYERS** speaks to friends and fans about the singular life of a most unlikely music hero.

IT IS THE SUMMER OF 2005, AND A 64-YEAR-OLD ENGLISHMAN LIES DYING from a chest infection in Vancouver General Hospital, British Columbia. Barely able to speak, he motions for his partner to press play on a small cassette deck by his bedside. As the strains of Sister Rosetta Tharpe's Up Above My Head echo through the ward, Long John Baldry quietly passes away.

As moving as the scene is, it was an undeniably anticlimactic exit for man who presided over the early '60s birth of British blues, etched out templates for John Mayall, Eric Clapton, The Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin, and personally discovered both Rod Stewart and Elton John. However, Baldry was no mere proselytizer. White, blond-haired, dizzyingly tall at 6' 7", a defiantly "out" gay man at a time when that was still a brave and dangerous decision, Baldry cut a flash and filigree figure in the nightclubs and dancehalls of '60s London, yet today his presence is largely absent from British music history. Just what happened?

John William Baldry was born during the London Blitz, on January 12, 1941. Enchanted by the blues at age seven, after hearing Sonny Terry And Brownie McGhee's Silver Fox Chase on the BBC's Kaleidoscope, by his teens Baldry was snapping up Jimmy Witherspoon and Muddy Waters 78s. Skiffle led Baldry to Huddie Ledbetter's original version of Lonnie Donegan's 1955 hit, Rock Island Line, and he took to busking Soho streets the following year, and playing blues in the city's coffee houses the year after that. "John knew what was going on," says Eric Clapton, an early witness to Baldry's showmanship. "He grasped the whole genre. He was a scholar."

Also in those early audiences was one Reginald Dwight, of Pinner, who would later change his name to Elton John, partly in tribute to Baldry's first name. "He was a fantastic blues guitarist," says Elton. "Just him on his own, singing Leadbelly stuff, was amazing."

In 1957, Baldry fell in with the emerging blues and skiffle scene converging around guitarist Alexis Korner and blues harp man Cyril Davies's London Blues and Barrelhouse Club. One of their frequent haunts was the upstairs room at the Roundhouse pub on Wardour Street. Baldry, Korner, Davies, and other influential musicians such as Ken Colyer, even 'trad jazzer' Chris Barber had all bonded around a deep love of the blues. This proved to be extremely contagious, and Baldry shared their passion. "I think that's how Alexis touched me," Baldry explained to Nick Orchard in 2003. "It was that pioneering spirit. It set our little corner of the world ablaze, in the early '60s."

IN 1962 BALDRY, KORNER AND DAVIES ATTENDED THE American Blues Folk Festival in Manchester, thrilling to Willie Dixon, John Lee Hooker, and Memphis Slim. The previous year, Korner had launched his seminal electric group, Blues Incorporated, with Davies on harmonica and Baldry as vocalist. The first amplified blues band in Britain, Blues Incorporated featured a rotating cast of Korner's fellow blues aficionados. Their inaugural residency was at Ealing Jazz Club, with Baldry's old school-chum, Charlie Watts, sitting in on drums. A 19-year-old Mick Jagger guested on vocals while fellow future Stones Bill Wyman and Keith Richards watched from the audience. Keen to learn, Brian Jones borrowed many of Baldry's prized blues LPs. He never returned them. Meanwhile, Baldry's reputation edged north.

"Before I came down from Manchester to form the Bluesbreakers," recalls John Mayall, "Long John was [this] distinguished figurehead… an important link between trad jazz and British blues."

A subsequent residency at the Marquee caught the ear of producer Jack Good, who recorded their debut album, *R&B From The Marquee*, for Decca in later in 1962. After his appearance on the record, Baldry embarked on a European solo tour, cultivating a taste for brandy and continental cigarettes, that would add an extra roughness to his already raspy yowl.

On his return in '63, Korner and Davies had fallen out. Baldry joined Davies' new band, The R&B All-Stars, then resident every Sunday at the Eel Pie Island Hotel. With a singing voice like a cement truck on a Mississippi gravel road, and between-song banter that suggested a half-cut Noel Coward impersonating Winston Churchill, Baldry turned Davies' All Stars into a major draw.

"It was unbelievable," said Ian McLagan in 2005. "I'd never miss [them]. They played like they were 45-year-old Chicago residents [but] in the intermission when Cyril would break for a drink, which he did often, [John] hit the stage with three buxom West Indian backup singers, The Velvettes. I was amazed. He'd sing more sophisticated blues than Cyril, and looked so smart, towering over the audience."

Mick Fleetwood, then drumming with The Cheynes, was similarly transfixed. "He was bigger than life," says Fleetwood. "He [had] this incredible gangling body, static, immaculate [and] very good-looking. I mean he knew about English tailoring, he had the whole deal, and he knew the shit."

After the perpetually unwell Davies succumbed to endocarditis in January 1964, Baldry inherited the All Stars, renaming them The Hoochie Coochie Men. The night after Davies's death, Baldry was on-stage, in tribute and defiance, at Eel Pie. Watching was a shy teenager with a lager in one hand, a blues harp in the other. After the show, the mop-haired lad stood on the platform of Twickenham railway station, drunkenly playing his harmonica. Waiting on the same platform, Baldry made a hasty introduction. By the time their train reached London, young Rod Stewart had joined The Hoochie Coochie Men as second vocalist.

DECCA
JAZZ
FJ.10647
ROCK ISLAND LINE
(Traditional)
THE LONNIE DONEGAN SKIFFLE GROUP
R&B from the MARQUEE
ACE of CLUBS
ALEXIS KORNER'S BLUES INCORPORATED

The Rolling Stones record for BBC's Radio Playhouse in '64, Baldry checks the script; (above) Blues Inc debut; Lonnie covers Leadbelly.

Good king John: Baldry on-stage at the Marquee with Steampacket's Julie Driscoll in 1965; (left, from left) Steampacket's Rod Stewart, Baldry, Driscoll and Brian Auger; (above left) seeing double as LJB entertains himself, 1967.

"JOHN'S DRINKING STARTED TO GET THE BETTER OF HIM, IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS, HE JUST DIDN'T TURN UP AT ALL." Brian Auger

In the spring of 1964, just after United Artists released *Long John's Blues*, Baldry accepted an invitation from his old mates, The Beatles, to appear solo on their TV special, Around The Beatles. Millions of Britons witnessed Baldry belting out an incendiary I Got My Mojo Working, while the cameras cut to the Fabs, singing and cheering from the wings. Having met the group in Hamburg, Baldry continued to expose them to his collection of authentic blues records whenever he played Liverpool. In a 2006 e-mail to this writer, Paul McCartney called Baldry "an important part of the '60s scene," adding, "I saw him quite a bit, on and off. He came round to my house for tea. He was a bit of a mate and a lovely man."

But as Baldry's reputation grew, so too did a self-destructive cycle of overwork and self-medication with alcohol, coupled with an often mercurial temperament. "I think he got very distracted, as a person," says Mick Fleetwood. "He was such a drama queen really, and he was not frightened of anybody, which didn't do him any good… He was probably almost impossible to manage, because I think he knew how good he was, you know? He would get impatient… 'Well my dear boy, I'm not going to be doing that.'"

By the end of 1964, Baldry claimed to be losing upwards of £400 a week, despite solid bookings. Rod Stewart saw the writing on the wall and left The Hoochie Coochie Men to go solo. But he was back in a few months, when Baldry asked him to become equal member, alongside Julie Driscoll and Brian Auger, in England's first supergroup, Steampacket. Auger says Steampacket were a kind of arranged marriage proposed after Baldry's manager voiced concern that The Hoochie Coochie Men were "totally out of control". As well as keyboardist, Auger acted as musical director and tour manager.

"It gave me the chance to play in front of a lot of people, John's audience," explains Auger. "Then John was saying, 'I'd like to have this other guy in the band called Rod Stewart.'"

Auger also wanted to bring in a female vocalist, Julie Driscoll, then working in Yardbirds' manager Giorgio Gomelsky's office opening fan mail.

Steampacket were modelled, says Auger, on the Sam & Dave revue. "[I'd] go on, play a couple of Jimmy Smith tunes and some kind of jazzy, funky teasers, then Julie would do her stuff – she was into Nina Simone and Tamla Motown. Then Rod could come on doing a lot of Sam Cooke and Tamla, with me and Julie singing backup. Then, finally, John came on with some straight Chicago and Delta blues, but also gospel stuff, which was great for us, 'cos we could all sing backup. It was incredibly successful. We were working like four, five, sometimes six nights a week!"

Having debuted at the Marquee in July 1965, Steampacket opened for The Rolling Stones, and turned in a show-stopping appearance at the fifth annual National Jazz & Blues Festival in Richmond, alongside The Yardbirds and The Who. "It was one hell of a band," says Rod Stewart. "We were earning £500 a night, and we didn't even have a hit record."

By the summer of '66, however, Steampacket had become the victim of their own success. Auger, who did all the tour driving, and had to lug his Hammond organ on and off the stage, with little help from the band, grew resentful. The group's managers arranged a conciliatory August residency at the Papagayo club in St Tropez but the booking destroyed any remaining shreds of goodwill. "John's drinking started to get the better of him," says Auger. "He began not showing for the second, third or fourth set. In the last two weeks, he just didn't turn up at all."

Back in England, Auger and Driscoll left ➢

mono
LONG JOHN'S BLUES
LONG JOHN BALDRY
and The Hoochie Coochie Men
Looking at Long John
Long John Baldry
John Baldry Everything Stops For Tea
JOHN BALDRY · IT AIN'T EASY

Alamy (3), Getty Images, Rex

ISC
MUSIC ECHO 9d
Beatles back on TV tonight
Scott Walker —first single
Hendrix —smash sell-out tour
LONG JOHN LEAPS TO THE TOP!

The fruits of his success: Baldry ponders the future in London, 1971; (below) an uncomfortable cover star.

< to form The Trinity, while Stewart joined the Steampacket-esque Shotgun Express. Baldry was on his own again, with little to show for Steampacket's brief time in the sun. "I was with United Artists," Baldry explained to Mod magazine The New Breed in 2001. "Rod was with Decca, Brian and Julie were with Parlophone and none of the labels would agree. So we never ever recorded."

THERE WAS SOME BRIEF CHEER WHEN BALDRY'S friend, Andrew Loog Oldham, invited the singer to compère The Rolling Stones' 1966 homecoming tour, but if cavorting with the Stones wasn't bad enough, life back in London was even more reckless as Baldry had become fast friends with London theatre maven Lionel Bart who, in addition to sharing Baldry's sexual preferences, was equally fond of wild indulgence. Giorgio Gomelsky recalls seeing Baldry and Bart in action, at private parties at Bart's Fulham home. "John was a bit of a dandy," says Gomelsky, "and Bart had done very well for himself in the West End with Oliver! We were often invited to Lionel's house to play for him. He was very generous, gave us great parties, and all the various pills that everyone was taking at the time."

"Lionel's house was a den of iniquity," says Rod Stewart. "All sorts of things used to go on round there, with two-way mirrors and sausage sandwiches…"

Fleet Street turned a blind eye to after-hours Baldry, while his public persona grew ever more mainstream. On record he was veering towards a lightweight Walker Brothers sound, even crooning a syrupy version of Make It Easy On Yourself on his 1966 LP, *Looking At Long John*.

Still needing a group, Baldry ended up at the Cromwellian in South Kensington to ask about their house band, Bluesology, another Steampacket copy featuring Marsha Hunt, Stuart Brown and the future Elton John, Reg Dwight. Peering out from behind his Vox Continental, Elton recognised Baldry from his coffee house days and his work with Steampacket. Bluesology quickly agreed to accompany Baldry on his next tour.

By now, he was desperate for a hit. Having seen Georgie Fame's career transformed by his 1965 Number 1, Yeh Yeh, Baldry wanted a little of that madness for himself. In 1967, Pye bought out his United Artists contract and paired him with in-house hitmaker Tony Macaulay, who offered the singer a lachrymose pop ballad ominously entitled Let The Heartaches Begin. Baldry mimed the tune on the November 22, 1967 episode of Top Of The Pops. It shot straight to Number 1. Mission accomplished.

"It's amazing what one hit record can do," Baldry told Maureen O'Grady in Rave magazine at the time. "[It] really has power… I get asked for my autograph in the street, which I don't mind, but I just can't stand screaming girls!"

As 1968 began, Baldry and Bluesology found steady work on the northern cabaret circuit, commanding a rumoured £20,000 a night. But Reg Dwight, still only the piano player, was growing restless. "It was very embarrassing," Elton recalls, "because we'd be playing a very bluesy set and then suddenly, halfway in, we'd stop and John would have the backing track to Let The Heartaches Begin on a tape recorder. We just stood there while he sang to the tape."

"I CANNOT BELIEVE I NEVER REALISED THAT HE WAS GAY, I DIDN'T REALISE I WAS GAY AT THAT TIME" Elton John

PYE
LONG JOHN BALDRY
45RPM
7N.17385
LET THE HEARTACHES BEGIN
A. SCHROEDER

In Long John's debt: Rod Stewart and Elton John convene A&R meeting; (inset) Baldry's Number 1; walking the goat Mayley.

Elton remembers that Baldry was "fantastic to work for", but clearly a "brandy man", prone to self-destructive behaviour. "I cannot believe I never realised that he was gay," adds Elton. "I mean, I didn't realise I was gay at that time… Of course, when I came out of the closet, John was very, very happy about it."

In fact, it was Baldry who talked Elton out of a doomed marriage to Linda Woodrow, just a few years later, in 1969, convincing him to see the truth of his own sexual orientation.

"You're a butterfly, and butterflies are free to fly. Fly away," was how Bernie Taupin later described it when writing lyrics for Elton's autobiographical album, *Captain Fantastic And The Brown Dirt Cowboy*, in 1975.

"One night John, Bernie and I went to the Bag O' Nails in Kingly Street and got incredibly drunk," says Elton. "John said to me, 'Why are you getting married to this woman? You are more in love with Bernie than you are this woman.' Of course, I knew he was right. I wasn't in love with Bernie in a carnal way, but certainly as a brother."

At the advice of "sugar bear" confidant Baldry, Elton went home, still drunk, and called off the wedding that night. "So John Baldry was the catalyst for Someone Saved My Life Tonight," says Elton. "Without that it could have been an entirely different story. He really did change the course of my life, bless his heart."

However, Let The Heartaches Begin closed as many doors as it opened. Follow-up single Mexico, based around the BBC’s official 1968 Olympics Theme, reached Number 17 in the charts but the *Let The Heartaches Begin* album divided critics at the precise moment when the blues sound Baldry had cultivated was gaining acceptance across the Atlantic. He had forsaken his roots to go pop, and was now stuck in a limbo between the two worlds.

“Hell,” he later told one interviewer, “if I’d stayed with the whole blues thing like Mayall and the rest of them, I probably would have achieved a greater degree of success. But you know, sometimes we all make silly mistakes.”

“John was one of the best 12-string blues guitarists Britain ever had,” says Elton John. “Unfortunately, he kind of laid that to waste when Heartaches became a hit.”

AS THE ’70S BEGAN, BALDRY WAS GOING nowhere, living with his pet goat, Mayley, in a Muswell Hill flat he rented from Rod Stewart. Sensing it was time for an intervention, Stewart and Elton joined forces to reintroduce Baldry to the world.

“One of the things Rod and I could do,” says Elton, “was produce a side each for John. We were his two protégés, and now we could [give] something back.”

The result was *John Baldry: It Ain’t Easy*, released in America by Warner Bros in 1971. The album’s two-track opener, Conditional Discharge – Baldry reminiscing about his early busking days, over Ian Armitt’s barrelhouse piano – smash-cut into the super-heavy Don’t Try To Lay No Boogie-Woogie On The King Of Rock And Roll, featuring blistering guitar work by Ronnie Wood and Sam Mitchell, and received generous airplay on American FM radio, necessitating Baldry’s first ever US tour. England wouldn’t have Long John to kick around any more.

Baldry blazed through North America on tour with Savoy Brown and Fleetwood Mac. His road manager at the time, John Francis Peters, became fascinated with the contradictions in Baldry’s personality.

“John could walk out on-stage, in front of 5,000 fans, and just deliver,” says Peters. “People would [already] be in awe because of his height. Then he’d open his mouth up and start singing and floor everybody, every night, no matter what condition he was in. But when you’re doing this for three weeks, every day a different city, the reality, the intensity of life, sometimes just overwhelmed him. Getting John on a plane – I would literally hold his hand. He would shake, sweat, and break out in rashes. But he never missed a show. He’d do it no matter how he felt. I feel that his drinking was possibly a way of trying to heal that extremely sensitive part of him.”

Rod and Elton dutifully resumed their roles for Baldry’s eccentric Warner Bros follow-up, 1972’s *Everything Stops For Tea*, which featured Ronnie Wood’s Lewis Carroll-inspired cover illustration, depicting Baldry as the Mad Hatter.

“I only did two or three tracks for him on that one,” says Rod Stewart. “I think I used the same guys on *Every Picture Tells A Story*, like Madeline Bell, and Maggie Bell. The title song, Everything Stops For Tea, was a Noel Coward number. I loved it when John sang all that stuff, so I said, Why don’t you try it on the album? He did a marvellous job with it.”

Elton’s contributions, meanwhile, employed his Honky Château crew, including Davey Johnstone and Nigel Olsson, on New Orleans standard Iko Iko, Willie Dixon’s Seventh Son and John Kongos’ Jubilee Cloud. But despite even more extensive touring throughout the USA and Canada, *Everything Stops* only troubled the lower reaches of the charts. Warner Bros failed to renew their option. Baldry’s next two LPs, *Good To Be Alive* and *Welcome To Club Casblanca* were released on Casablanca. Both sank without trace, and Baldry began to exhibit signs of depression, exacerbated by heavy drinking. Brief respite came at New York’s Studio 54 in February 1978, when Baldry fell in love with the man who would become his constant companion for the rest of his life, Felix Rexach, who everyone knew as “Oz”.

Baldry and Oz left New York for Toronto, where the Canadian arm of Capitol Records released the cheekily-titled *Baldry’s Out!* in 1979. Rollicking and confident, it was his most solid collection since the Warner Bros years. A fired-up duet with Kathi McDonald on You’ve Lost That Loving Feeling was a minor hit in Canada and Top 5 in Australia, while the impact of the remarkable follow-up, A Thrill’s A Thrill, an earnest dispatch from the leather-clad underworld of the downtown gay club scene, resulted in a extra 200,000 LP sales in Canada alone. But success was once again short-lived, and the Capitol deal fizzled after a succession of subsequent releases yielded increasingly diminishing returns.

Baldry and Oz settled down in Vancouver, British Columbia, with Baldry returning to the blues and lending his booming voice to animation work. In 1997 he won a Juno Award (Canada’s Grammy) for *Right To Sing The Blues*, and paid tribute to Huddie Ledbetter with his final LP, *Remembering Leadbelly*, in 2001. He swore off cigarettes and vodka in the ’90s, after a bleeding ulcer sent to him to the emergency ward, but his health remained poor. He suffered from epilepsy and stayed away from nightclubs for fear the flashing lights might trigger a fit. He developed gout and found it harder to move his massive frame along the streets of Vancouver without a cane. By March of 2005, he had also developed osteoporosis and underwent hip replacement surgery. His faithful protégé, Rod Stewart, checked in on him from time to time, and helped out financially, but by April, Baldry entered intensive care, never to return. “We would talk over the phone every couple of months,” says Stewart. “He always put on a brave front.”

Looking far older than his 64 years, Baldry passed away on July 21, 2005. The official cause of death was listed as severe chest infection, but it may just as well have been Baldry’s full appetite for life that ultimately did him in. “You know,” says Brian Auger, “I stayed in touch with him right ’til the end, because he was one of the most genuine human beings I’ve ever met in the music business. He was very kind and intelligent; you could talk to him about just about anything. He was really a gentleman.”

“I think you can have all the talent in the world, but you do need a little bit of luck,” says Rod Stewart. “My luck just happened to be that he was on that railway station and he heard me playing the harmonica and singing, and he believed in me. It’s a tremendous debt.”

“I loved knowing and working with him,” concludes Elton John. “It’s extraordinary that people have to wait until they die to get mass recognition. He never recorded the big blues album he should have done at the time but he was one of the great blues pioneers of British music.” Ⓜ

THE THREE JOHNS

A trio of Baldry belters, by ANDREW MALE

LOOKING AT LONG JOHN (The UA Years 1964-66)

(EMI, 2006)

★★★★

Well-mastered two-disc overview of Baldry’s years with United Artists, featuring the barrelhouse R&B of 1965’s Long John’s Blues (with The Hoochie Coochie Men), singles, B-sides and the oddly enjoyable pop-soul of 1966’s *Looking At Long John*, where on tracks like The Drifter, House Next Door and Unseen Hands offer lonesome notes from Baldry’s private life.

BOOGIE WOOGIE: The Warner Bros Years

(Warner Bros, 2014)

★★★★

A twofer of the ‘comeback’ LPs cut in the early ’70s, with the help of Elton John and Rod Stewart. *It Ain’t Easy* is the better LP – hear Baldry’s sinister cover of Randy Newman’s Let’s Burn Down The Cornfield and the heavy rockin’ Don’t Try To Lay No Boogie-Woogie…; *Everything Stops For Tea* has a lovely bluegrass duet with Rod on Charlie Monroe’s Mother Ain’t Dead.

REMEMBERING LEADBELLY

(Stony Plain, 2001)

★★★

His final studio LP is a heartfelt love-letter to Huddie Ledbetter, and finds the 60-year-old Baldry in his element, backed by sympathetic US folk musicians, wrapping his gravelly, aged pipes around 16 Leadbelly tracks – including a hoedown take of Gallows Pole and a John Hardy with just raw voice, harmonium and an 1865 pump organ.

Baldry with Rod and Penny Lancaster after a London club date in 2004.

Rex (2), Alamy, Getty Images

motörhead

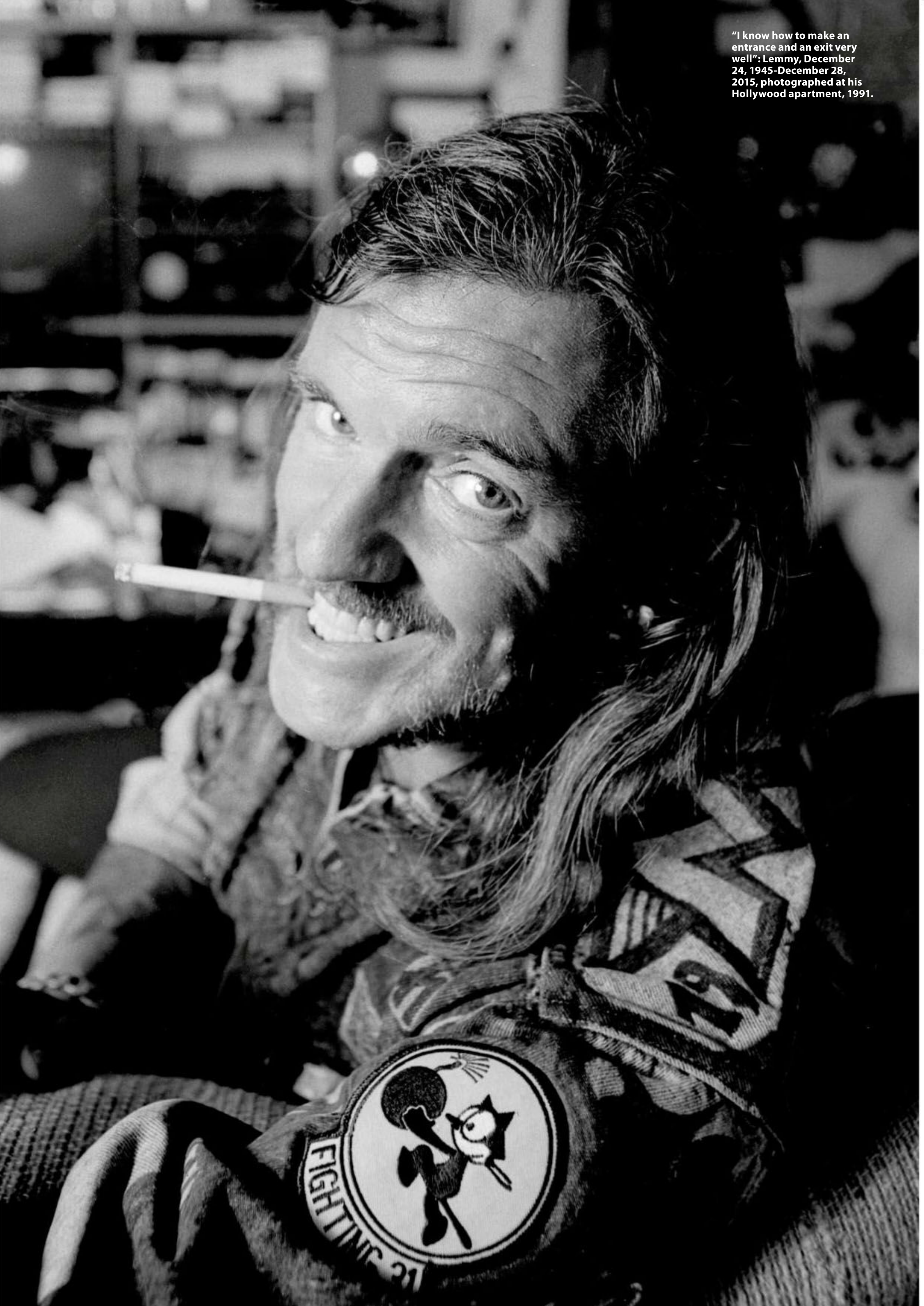
BORN TO LOSE

1945-2015

LIVE TO WIN

TO SOME, THE QUINTESSENTIAL ROCK'N'ROLL REBEL AND LIBERTINE. TO OTHERS, A WARM, SOPHISTICATED MAN DOGGED BY HIS BAND'S ICONIC PAST BUT ALWAYS FORGING ON, NEVER COMPROMISING, ESSENTIALLY ALONE. **Sylvie Simmöns** SORTS THROUGH 30-ODD YEARS OF INTERVIEWS TO SALUTE THE **Lemmy** SHE KNEW.

Ross Halfin PHOTOGRAPHY



"I know how to make an entrance and an exit very well": Lemmy, December 24, 1945-December 28, 2015, photographed at his Hollywood apartment, 1991.

THE DRAB-LOOKING VICTORIAN home on an unremarkable street in Clapham, south-west London, could be any old house, but it's not. It's the Motörhouse, home to a man who once proclaimed that if his band moved in next door, your lawn would die. A quick glance at the neighbouring front garden appears to suggest that Lemmy may well have been telling the truth.

Inside it's dark and cosy, the curtains drawn against the afternoon sun. There's a fireplace cluttered with band paraphernalia and World War II memorabilia. One wall is plastered with a collage of Page 3 model Samantha Fox. In a corner, leaning against the wall, is a parking meter that Lemmy found uprooted outside the Embassy Club and which he brought home in a cab, thinking it might make a nice garden ornament. Model aeroplanes dangle from the ceiling, cigarettes and whisky bottles litter the floor, a pile of books teeter on the sofa – Lemmy averages four a week – and on the TV a Raquel Welch video plays, volume turned down. Würzel, Motörhead's affable guitarist and bassist Lemmy's roommate, is in the kitchen making tea.

It's the summer of 1986. Lemmy is 40 and Motörhead, now in their eleventh year, have a new album ready for release, hence our visit. According to Lemmy – not a man given to hyperbole – *Orgasmatron* is "the best thing we've done since *Ace Of Spades*."

That said, the recent years have not been easy on the man. The band's most revered line-up – Lemmy, drummer Phil 'Philthy Animal' Taylor and guitarist 'Fast' Eddie Clarke dissolved in 1982 when Clarke quit, upset at Lemmy's collaboration with Plasmatics singer Wendy O Williams on a cover of Tammy Wynette's Stand By Your Man. Clarke's replacement, ex-Thin Lizzy man Brian 'Robbo' Robertson left after 1983's critically lambasted *Another Perfect Day*, and Taylor departed the following year after Motörhead's appearance on TV show The Young Ones.

In typically stoic style, Lemmy has soldiered on, assembling another Motörhead line-up with Würzel, drummer Pete Gill and guitarist Phil Campbell. For the past three years, he's also been in a legal battle with the band's record label, Bronze, which has prevented him from releasing under the Motörhead banner. While critics wrote the band's premature obituary, Lemmy navigated this period by taking the band on the road.

"They all thought I was going to lay Motörhead to rest, cross its arms over its chest, shut its eyes and leave it," snorts Lemmy. "Well *I* invented Motörhead. It's Motörhead as long as I'm in it. Motörhead is my livelihood. If I gave it up what would I have left? Fuck all."

"They all thought I was going to lay Motörhead to rest, shut its eyes and leave it."

IT'S A STRANGE SENSATION, NOW HE'S GONE, poring through a stack of the interviews I did with him over the decades, like a box of old photographs in an empty room. There are so many different locations and different line-ups, all these different albums and ventures – a film, a documentary, his autobiography, side-projects. What's so extraordinary about it, though, is how consistent Lemmy was, always. Nothing changed. Not his conviction, his sound, his warmth and his deadpan humour, nor the subjects he was serious about, which were often the subjects of his songs. Whether it was his taste in drugs, clothes and women, his honesty, or his leadership of the band, Lemmy was steadfast, unflinching, authentic.

"I used to bunk off school": the young Ian Kilmister, failed KGB agent.

You could say the value of constancy struck him early. Ian Fraser Kilmister was born in Stoke-On-Trent on Christmas Eve, 1945; his father, a Protestant vicar who served as a chaplain in the RAF, walked out on his wife and only child when Lemmy was three months old. "The Reverend Sidney Kilmister," Lemmy would almost spit when asked about him, was "the biggest hypocrite".

Lemmy's mother remarried

WENDY & LEMMY
A
STAND BY YOUR MAN

Classic Motörhead (left) Lemmy, 'Fast' Eddie Clarke, Phil 'Philthy Animal' Taylor; (right, from top) with Wendy O Williams, 1982; horse fancier Lemmy saddles up, May 10, 1974; in Hawkwind (second from right) 1974.

motörhead
ACE OF SPADES

when he was 10 to George Willis, a former professional footballer. "He was a Catholic, and my mother, in order to get remarried, had to write to The Pope to ask his permission. How can religion not piss you off?" said Lemmy during one of our many conversations.

When his new family left the Midlands for Anglesey, an island off the coast of North Wales, Lemmy's sense of isolation emerged. "I learnt what it was like to be a minority," he reflected. "The only English kid in a Welsh school. One in 700. They actually lined up to fight me." It was where he learned how to scrap and defend himself, he said – something that would stand him in good stead over the years – but also where he learned the futility of violence: "No matter how many you beat, there's always another one. Or another 200."

Naturally bright, Lemmy's academic interests also became evident: "I was good at history and English; everything else I was crap at." Typical of a man born just 16 weeks after the end of World War II, he developed a fascination with the rise of Nazi Germany, particularly "the pageantry and theatre that they brought in to suck- ➢

Sheila Rock, Iconicpix, Getty Images, LFI/Photoshot

CBS
THE ROCKIN' VICKERS
DANDY
SAM GOPAL
ESCALATOR
plus Bonus Tracks

Ace of bass: Lemmy on-stage on the Overkill tour, St Albans, 1979; (right, from top) chatting with Hank B Marvin at the MOJO Awards, June 22, 2004; in The Rockin' Vickers 1966 Kinks cover and line-up, Lemmy is far right; in Sam Gopal (Lemmy, far left); Hawkwind hit Silver Machine had Lemmy's lead vocal.

≺ er people." While Lemmy once described Adolf Hitler to me as "the first rock star" – and every obituary made sure to mention his extensive collection of Nazi memorabilia – the man retained a complete hatred of the Führer and his ideology.

As he prepared to enter his teenage years, rock'n'roll struck its opening chords. "Fierce joy!" is how he described his feelings when hearing Little Richard for the first time. "I'd listen to Radio Luxembourg – that was the only station playing rock'n'roll in Britain then," he remembered. "It used to cut out all the time, so you'd hear a record you really liked and then it would go *sss-zzz-sss* so you wouldn't know who did it, and you'd have to wait for four days with your ear glued to the radio until they played it again. I used to sit like that the whole evening listening to the radio in Wales. It was a magic time, that first rock'n'roll time. Kids now have always had rock'n'roll as a background music, but we didn't. We had fucking Rosemary Clooney and How Much Is That Bastard Doggie In The Window. Then Bill Haley came in and Tommy Steele. I knew they were no good but they were the best we had so far, and then, of course, [came] Elvis, Chuck Berry, Little Richard."

Although it doesn't exactly fit the outlaw image, Lemmy's entrée into music-making came via his mother.

"She had a guitar hanging on the wall – a Hawaiian steel guitar – which she used to play," he said. "I took it with me to school to impress the chicks. It worked like a charm. I could do all the moves."

The moves in question were those of Hank Marvin, the lead guitarist in The Shadows, a man he presented with an award at the inaugural MOJO Honours List in August 2004, citing the band as the reason he'd elected to pick up a six-string.

"I couldn't play it, I just took it to school," he cackled. "The strings were high up and you played it flat on your lap. But I started playing it like a regular guitar. It gave you strong fingers. That's how I got to play the bass so fluently. Death grip!"

"If you live on your own, it's kind of quiet. You don't jump around the house. There's no audience."

On the bootheels of the Shads came The Beatles. It was a step-change. "The Beatles were just the best band ever, no contest," he told me in 2006. "I was 16 or 17 and living in Anglesey when I saw them at The Cavern, '61, '62, before their first single came out."

If The Shadows had provided him with initial inspiration, then The Beatles cemented the idea of a band as a gang in the teenager's mind. They were "a four-headed monster, each as good as each other, feeding on each other's energy." This seemingly telepathic understanding was something he particularly admired and would later strive to replicate.

Hawkwind
Silver Machine

AFTER LEAVING SCHOOL THERE WERE A handful of dead-end jobs (factory; stables – he loved horses) and a long list of local bands: The Sundowners ("truly awful"), The Blue Jays ("psychedelic"), The Rainmakers, The Motown Sect ("we just called it that to get gigs"), most of whom played covers. "Shadows stuff mostly," he said. "I was playing rhythm guitar, then the bottom fell out of the rhythm market so I had to try and become a lead guitarist and I'm no good at lead. I'm good at rhythm, good at driving a song."

Mick Hutson, Ross Halfin, courtesy of Phil Smee, Photoshot, Getty Images

Motörhead in the ’80s: (from left) Phil Campbell, Taylor, Lemmy, Mick ‘Würzel’ Burston.

In 1965 Lemmy joined cult Blackpool beat merchants The Rockin’ Vickers who, under the watchful eye of producer Shel Talmy, cut a cover of The Kinks’ Dandy for CBS the following year.

“We wore dog collars and the Finnish national costume. North of Birmingham we were getting more than £200 a night – good money in them days, about two grand now. We all had cars.”

If The Rockin’ Vickers were local heroes who hung out with visiting stars like The Who (“great mates of ours”), The Tremeloes (“fucking nutters”) and Lulu (“a fucking raver back then”), Lemmy was aware that London was where things were at and decamped there at 21, crashing for a night at Ronnie Wood’s mum’s place and then staying at a girlfriend’s pad on the Portobello Road. It was Who roadie Neville Chesters who recommended him to Jimi Hendrix, for whom Lemmy would work for four months earning £10 per week. His stint included the famous November-December ’67 package tour with The Move, Pink Floyd, Amen Corner and The Nice. The fringe benefits included Owsley-made acid (Lemmy’s first trip came in Jimi’s company; his last was in 1975, after which he switched to liquid meth) as well as all the girls he wanted.

“Chicks were just drooling all over Jimi because of the way he moved,” he recalled. “But he was really well-mannered too. He’d pull chairs out for chicks and open the door – which I still do now, because I was taught that way by my ma.”

Lemmy’s increasingly psychedelic adventures led him to join Sam Gopal, the band led by the Burmese-born tabla player of the same name, his prodigious intake of speed allowing him to write the bulk of the songs on the band’s 1969 album, *Escalator*, “in one night”. The group’s lack of commercial success led to a swift demise and saw Lemmy reduced to dealing cannabis at Kensington Market to make ends meet. By now, however, he was a face about town, and when bassist Dave Anderson left Hawkwind following the release of their second album, *In Search Of Space*, in late ’71, he joined, adapting to his four-string duties on the fly.

“It was easy because they didn’t change key for half an hour,” he reflected. “I loved playing bass. I owe Hawkwind that because I’d have never thought of it. I would have still been a mediocre guitarist.”

In Hawkwind, Lemmy’s songwriting continued to evolve. He wrote The Watcher (“which was an acid song”) and Motorhead (“which wasn’t!”), and sang on the band’s sole hit single, Silver Machine, in the summer of ’72. “It pissed them off too. Because I’d only just joined, I was ‘the new boy’, and there it was at Number 1 [or rather, 3] and [there was] a picture of me on the front of the NME which *really* pissed them off. I think that’s where the rot started.” Tensions in Hawkwind were exacerbated by ➢

“He was always a gentleman with me”: with Sid Vicious and “black widow” Nancy Spungen.

The Tao of Lemmy

A COMPENDIUM OF WIT AND WISDOM

On Becoming A Spy...

“I used to bunk off school, that’s as far as I got. They’re not going to let a nine-year-old kid run away anywhere. I wished I’d had a bicycle. I tried to join the KGB and they turned me down – said I was too young. I had to be 10.”

On His Love Of Horses...

“I was going to breed horses at one point. I bought two stallions at the horse fair – I was 17 – and I had them for a couple of years. But I lost interest really, because I heard rock’n’roll and I went on the road. So we had them gelded and sold them to a girls’ school. With all the chicks sneaking down giving them lumps of sugar, I’m sure they ended their days fat as bastards.”

On Keith Moon...

“Keith Moon always had the edge on everybody. He used to dress up as Long John Silver to go down the road to buy stamps at the Post Office. He gave his pony a nervous breakdown. He had a milk float and a hovercraft, and he used to chase this pony in this hovercraft. One day it just lay down and wouldn’t move. He got the vet and he said, ‘It’s got clinical depression. It’s having the pony equivalent of a nervous breakdown.’”

On Sid Vicious...

“He was always a gentleman with me, because he used to kip on our couch – with Viv out of The Slits – when we had the squat in Holland Park. He used to come and crash there and I tried to teach him to play bass. But I couldn’t do it because he had no idea. He was not terribly bright, you know. About three months later he’s in the Pistols, still not playing the bass. But Sid never had a fucking chance. As soon as Nancy [Spungen] got hold of him he was dead meat. She was like death, the black widow.”

On Hippies...

“The hippy thing was all right for a while but them Afghan coats start getting iffy after a bit. Stank like donkeys. Or goats. I never wore one. I had a frilly shirt though. I got it from Apple, when they had that big giveaway and I went up there and got a free shirt. It was lilac.”

On The First Motörhead LP...

“We were all speed freaks. John [Burns], the engineer, was a speed freak too by the time we finished. We all passed out by the second day – we’d been up all night recording 11 tracks in one day.”

On Monty Python...

“I made love to a woman with Monty Python playing, the Beethoven record [*Another Monty Python Album*]. Did it work? I suppose so. I fucked her – I don’t know if you’d call that working or not. There was three years with Motörhead when we never said anything except in Monty Python phrases.”

On TV Adverts...

“Kit Kat was the best one – the one with the violin. That was fun. It’s not the music they’re after, it’s the ‘character’. The Walkers Crisps people were going to do a cut-out figure that they would stand up in stores. I don’t think that ever happened.”

On Winning A Grammy...

“We got it for a Metallica cover [Whiplash, in 2005]. They didn’t even give it to us for one of our songs. They managed to get the knife in even when they’d given us a Grammy. Of course, we weren’t on the televised bit. We were on the day before with the Spanish jazz bands and the South American rumba quartets. But we beat Slipknot.”

On Sexism...

“All these heavy rock guys think, ‘If it’s got tits it’s no good,’ but it’s not true. With [Girlschool’s] Kelly Johnson, people used to say ‘good guitarist for a girl’ and I’d say, Fuck you, she’s better than you, because she was a magic guitar player. If you listen to the solo on Don’t Call It Love or The Hunter, she plays like Jeff Beck used to play with The Yardbirds.”

On Celebrations...

“I hate celebrations. It’s usually people saying things they don’t mean to people who don’t deserve them.”

Still magic: Lemmy flanked by the final Motörhead drummer Mikkey Dee (left) and guitarist Phil Campbell.

Chiswick
Motörhead
WIK 2
STEREO

⮜ what Lemmy termed "a hierarchy in the drug-taking fraternity". Namely, a division between those taking acid and those on speed – principally himself. Of the three studio albums on which he appeared – *Doremi Fasol Latido* (1972), *Hall Of The Mountain Grill* (1974) and *Warrior On the Edge Of Time* (1975) – none surpassed the aggression of 1973's live *Space Ritual*. "That sound was like we sounded, really captured it," he said.

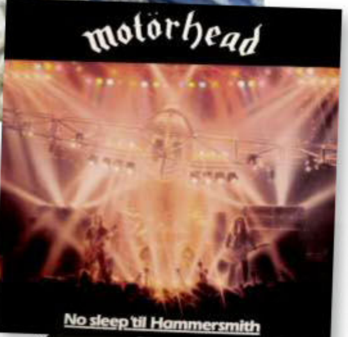
Lemmy's exit from Hawkwind notoriously followed his bust at the US-Canadian border in May '75 for carrying amphetamines and, while he remained on good terms with leader Dave Brock ("he didn't want to fire me; he was persuaded"), he resented being forced out of a band he clearly loved. His ejection saw him form his own band, briefly named Bastard and then rechristened Motörhead, with Larry Wallis of Pink Fairies and drummer Lucas Fox. "I was listening to the MC5 by then," he told me, "and I wanted to *be* the MC5 – a five-piece, kickass rock'n'roll band."

An absence of suitable guitarists or, indeed, singers saw the band remain as a three-piece. "Singers were hard to find in them days," Lemmy said. "It was easy to find people who thought they *could* sing – and I wasn't one of them. But I got stuck with it. I grew to like it."

IT'S A SCORCHING AFTERnoon in Hollywood, 1982. Lemmy, dressed in his customary black, is on a chair beneath a patio umbrella beside a motel pool, chatting with fans. That must have been around the time I introduced him to a young admirer named Lars Ulrich, who told Lemmy he was the president of his US fan club. Then, after accepting Lemmy's offer of a beverage (a screwdriver, to be precise), Ulrich vomited on his boots.

But Lemmy always made time for fans, a number of whom – like Ulrich – formed their own bands, inspired by Motörhead's uncompromising approach and the then-burgeoning New Wave Of British Heavy Metal. As he always stated, Lemmy had little truck with the latter scene, being far more aligned with punk's desire to recapture rock'n'roll's original intensity.

"We started in '75, then '76 was when Phil and Eddie got in the band, so we were playing at the Roundhouse supporting The Damned. Everybody got bottled by somebody that night!" he recalled in 2006, laughing at the thought. "But they were great shows. I always felt more of an affinity with the punks than I did with heavy metal."



Motörhead's association with punk was sealed by their self-titled debut album, essentially recorded in 24 hours, and released in '77 on the Chiswick label – home to The Damned, The Gorillas and The Count Bishops. Rough and ready, it paved the way for *Overkill* and *Bomber*, both released in '79 and both helmed by Stones producer Jimmy Miller, records that truly defined the band's reputation and sound. Then came 1980's *Ace Of Spades*, along with its title track that dented the UK Top 20 when it was released as a single. Proud of the band's rise, Lemmy was nevertheless aware that the album's success could be a double-edged sword.

"Well, it does get a bit tiring when it's the only thing [people have] ever heard and they say it's such a fantastic record. And I say, Yeah, so great you've not heard anything we've done after it! That really pisses me off, because if you like a band, you listen to their new stuff too, surely," he sighed years later.

"I adore the cello, always have. The one who introduced it to me really was Paul McCartney."

The success of 1981's live set, *No Sleep 'Til Hammersmith* – which topped the UK album chart – piled further pressure on the naturally excessive band, and would ultimately lead to the splintering of Motörhead's most revered line-up as they struggled to maintain their momentum.

"How do you follow a live album that's gone in straight at Number 1? You can't make another live album, and no studio album is going to be as exciting," said Lemmy years later, adding, "*Hammersmith* was our claim to fame, but for that moment to define you gets a bit tedious."

IN THE 34 YEARS THAT elapsed since the triumph of that landmark live album, few bands have remained as impervious to trends as Motörhead. Their output across their 22 studio albums has been remarkably consistent, culminating in *Bad Magic*, released in August 2015. The tenth album in 19 years to feature the line-up of Lemmy, guitarist Phil Campbell

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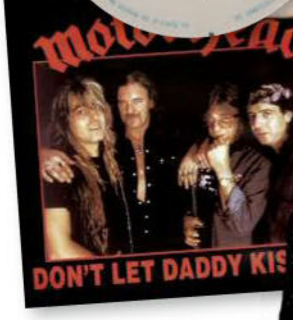
MAMA I'M COMING HOME



At Hammersmith Odeon, May '89, with Ozzy Osbourne, who said, "They're not good lyrics, they're *amazing* lyrics."

and drummer Mikkey Dee, *Bad Magic* remains remarkably heavy but, alongside the hammer-down, thunderous charge of tracks like The Devil and Shoot Out All Your Lights, there's the semi-acoustic strum of Till The End, where Lemmy, looking back with unusual introspection, concludes that "All I know is who I am/I'll never let you down." You might call it a rare chink in the 'war pig' armour, but Lemmy has opened up before, most notably on Capricorn (titled after his star sign) from *Overkill*. On it, the singer describes himself as "solitaire, to the bone" and admits, "when I was young/I was already old" – candid acknowledgment of personality traits that stayed with him throughout.

Indeed, in all the tributes that have flowed since his passing, few mentioned Lemmy's talent as a songwriter, the way he internalised the wit and cadences of the early rock'n'roll records he loved, and infused his creations with his inimitable personality. Listen to the speed freak anthem Motorhead and you can hear the humour in his delivery of the immortal line: "Can't get enough/And you know it's righteous stuff/Goes up like prices at Christmas."

While best known for songs that embraced the what-the-hell hedonism of life on the road, Lemmy felt no subject was out of bounds – be it war or, indeed, child abuse. One of his best lyrics was penned for the title track to Motörhead's 1991 album, *1916*, inspired by a UK TV programme about the Battle Of The Somme on which a veteran reminisced about his friend dying in his arms with half his face blown off.

"It came to me in a flash. I wrote it in 10 minutes," he explained. "The old guy is 88 or something, and he's still in tears about it. He walked through 25 feet of muddy shit into the teeth of machine gun fire, all for nothing: 19,000 Englishmen killed before noon. Think! All those lives. And some bastard on a white horse probably got a medal for it too. You can imagine the bastards can't you? Back at the club."

The track itself is a slow ballad, Lemmy coming as close to a croon as he ever did in a startling arrangement featuring marching drums and a cello. "I adore the cello, always have," said its author. "The one who introduced it to me really was Paul McCartney – so effective on Yesterday and Eleanor Rigby."

Equally trenchant is Don't Let Daddy Kiss Me, written in 1990 from the point of view of a young female victim of sexual abuse. "I want a woman to sing it. I'd like it done acoustic, or quiet at least," said Lemmy at the time. "It's wrong if a man sings it, I think, because he's the protagonist and it might seem gloating."

The song was offered to Joan Jett and Lita Ford. Both rejected it, so Motörhead recorded it, Lemmy's vocal cracking with emotion on a ballad that became an unlikely single in 1993. The most successful Lemmy ballad, however, was Mama, I'm Coming Home – a track he co-wrote for Ozzy Osbourne which secured the Black Sabbath man his only solo US Top 30 hit. In the wake of Lemmy's death, Ozzy explained that his friend had written the words in less than two hours, all while starting and finishing a book about World War II that Ozzy had given him that same afternoon. "He'd written me three sets of lyrics," marvelled Ozzy. "He just writes them as if he's writing a message. And it's like, He wrote this in *how long*?" And they're not good lyrics – they're *fucking* amazing lyrics."

JANUARY 12, 2016. WEST HOLLYWOOD'S SUNSET STRIP has been transformed into a celebration of Lemmy's life and music. The epicentre of this thronging, 24-hour party is the Rainbow Bar And Grill, the place where Lemmy spent so much of his time following his move to LA in 1990. At the time, commemorative T-shirts emblazoned with the slogan 'Lemmy Goes To Hollywood' were produced by Motörhead's management. Today's commemoration is rather different. Yet for all the sadness that has been felt since the man's passing on December 28, four days after turning 70 and two days after being diagnosed with an aggressive cancer, there's also an understanding that Lemmy was never one for regrets. During one of our longest conversations I asked him whether he'd ever felt trapped by the persona he'd created. He looked slightly surprised by the question.

"You know that's not true," he replied. "You've seen me at home. If you live on your own, it's kind of quiet, even if you're 20. You don't jump around the house on your own. There's no audience, so there's no point. But I know how to make an entrance and an exit very well."

Iconicpix, Eyevine

Sold by Völume

Lemmy: IMMORTALISED IN FIVE ALBUMS. BY Phil Alexander.

Hawkwind

SPACE RITUAL

(United Artists, 1973)

♠♠♠♠♠

Having only switched to playing bass in order to join Hawkwind 18 months earlier, Lemmy developed an almost telepathic understanding with leader and guitarist Dave Brock. The pair propel the band ever forward on an album whose sonic power is almost overwhelming, Lemmy's presence on Orgone Accumulator displaying the oft-overlooked lyrical aspect in his playing.

We almost chose: Hawkwind *Doremi Fasol Latido (United Artists, 1972)*

Motörhead

OVERKILL

(Bronze, 1979)

♠♠♠♠♠

With their second album the three-piece of Lemmy, 'Fast' Eddie Clarke and Phil 'Philthy Animal' Taylor succeeded in delivering their first definitive statement. The connoisseur's choice, *Overkill* is greasier and more consistent than *Ace Of Spades* – the title track, No Class and Damage Case remaining on the band's set list until the end.

We almost chose: Motörhead *Ace Of Spades (Bronze, 1980)*

Motörhead

1916

(Sony/WTG, 1991)

♠♠♠♠

Written off at the end of the '80s, Motörhead re-emerged with *1916* – a bold statement of intent that was heavier and more expansive than previous albums. Material like The One To Sing The Blues and R.A.M.O.N.E.S. is more rapacious than ever, but most startling of all was Lemmy's decision to croon his way through Love Me Forever and the hugely affecting title track.

We almost chose: Motörhead *Bastards (ZYX Music, 1993)*

Motörhead

BAD MAGIC

(UDR, 2015)

♠♠♠♠

Aware that time was short, the three-piece of Lemmy, Phil Campbell and Mikkey Dee worked live-in-the-studio on a number of tracks on this, the album that became their last. If Lemmy's vocals are at times frayed, there is no doubting the sheer intent and determination on tracks like The Devil, Electricity or the emotive When The Sky Comes Looking For You.

We almost chose: Motörhead *Motörizer (Steamhammer/SPV, 2008)*

Lemmy

DAMAGE CASE

(Castle Communications, 2006)

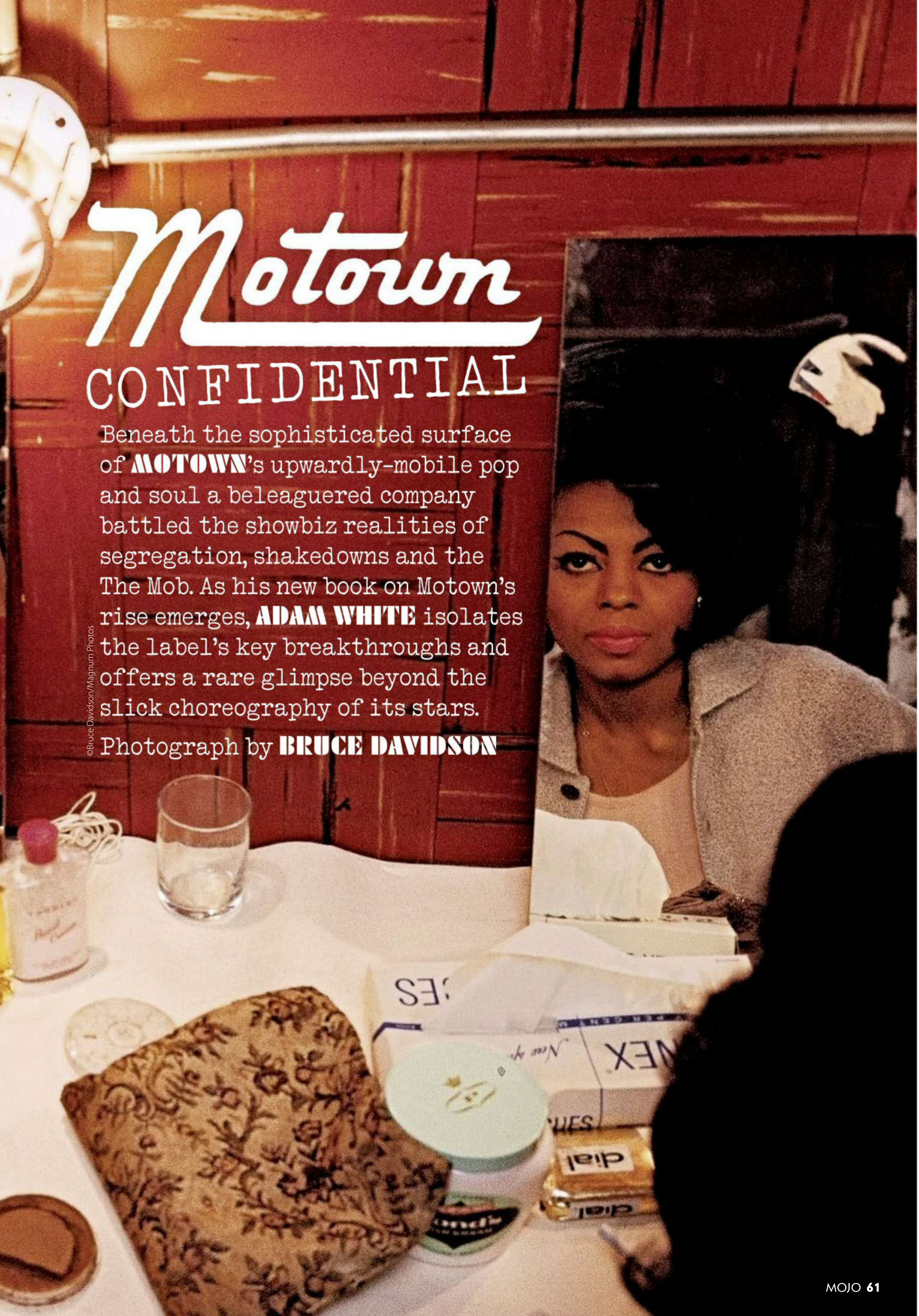
♠♠♠

The definitive Lemmy anthology, the 31-track *Damage Case* begins with The Rockin' Vickers, moves on to Sam Gopal, and takes in every aspect of the great man's career, including collaborations, innumerable side projects and Motörhead's Grammy-winning cover of Metallica's Whiplash. It is a fine alternative history of a man whose faith in rock'n'roll remained unshakable until the end.

We almost chose: The Head Cat *Fool's Paradise (Rock-A-Billy 1642, 2006)*

Take me home: Lemmy in Los Angeles, March 2010.

Showtime!: The Supremes (from left) Florence Ballard, Mary Wilson and Diana Ross attend to eyes and hair before an Apollo show in New York, 1965, the year they stormed the Big Apple's white showbiz citadel the Copacabana.



Motown
CONFIDENTIAL

Beneath the sophisticated surface of **MOTOWN**'s upwardly-mobile pop and soul a beleaguered company battled the showbiz realities of segregation, shakedowns and the The Mob. As his new book on Motown's rise emerges, **ADAM WHITE** isolates the label's key breakthroughs and offers a rare glimpse beyond the slick choreography of its stars.

Photograph by **BRUCE DAVIDSON**

©Bruce Davidson/Magnum Photos

Motown movers: (left, far left) Raynoma Gordy and Barney Ales and (far right) Mitzi Ales and Berry Gordy in a Detroit club, c1960; (right) Temptations' classic lineup sing their hit, My Girl, in 1965 (from left) Melvin Franklin, Eddie Kendricks, Otis Williams, Paul Williams, David Ruffin.

MOTOWN QUINTET THE TEMPTATIONS WERE flying high. It was the second week of June 1969, and *Cloud Nine* was 12 weeks into its Top 20 run on the US album charts, their latest single, Don't Let The Joneses Get You Down, was surging up the best-sellers, and the group were playing at the Mecca of African-American culture, New York's Apollo Theatre.

CLOUD NINE
THE TEMPTATIONS

THE ORIGINAL SOUND TRACK FROM
TCB
DIANA ROSS AND THE SUPREMES
WITH THE TEMPTATIONS
STEREO

TAMLA
"I HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE"
MARVIN GAYE
Produced by NORMAN WHITFIELD

Motown was prospering with its stars. Its first TV production, TCB (Takin' Care of Business), featuring Diana Ross And The Supremes with The Temptations, had been a Top 5 ratings hit the previous December, beating Bonanza, Bewitched and The Beverly Hillbillies. In January, a pair of Supremes/Temptations duet albums took two of the Top 3 in Billboard, held from Number 1 only by The Beatles. That same January, Marvin Gaye's I Heard It Through The Grapevine was the most popular song in America for the entire month. And in February, The Beatles' *White Album* finally surrendered the chart summit to the TCB soundtrack.

But backstage at the Apollo, the scene was not so serene. In the office of Apollo principal Frank Schiffman, three men were accusing Motown of failing to support black causes while being swift to back Jewish and other white agencies. Taking the heat was Don Foster, personal assistant to Motown founder/president, Berry Gordy Jr. The trio of visitors was associated with a New York-based group called the Fair Play for Black Citizens Committee. They spoke in generalities, but the implication was that they expected Motown's future support. One of them noted that there were Apollo theatres in other cities, and all it took was one "phone call".

The Fair Play "committee" was already known as trouble. The previous summer in Miami, it had muscled into the annual convention of the black disc jockeys' organisation, the National Association of Television and Radio Announcers, ostensibly to garner support for helping disadvantaged Harlem residents. But Motown learned that the group had crime connections, and was trying to infiltrate R&B-formatted radio stations to extort money from record companies. At the Miami event, there were assaults and intimidation. Legendary Atlantic Records producer Jerry Wexler, for one, fled the convention in fear for his life.

In August 1969, Berry Gordy was due to attend the NATRA convention in Washington, DC, to make a donation to the organisation, as he had in previous years. This time, there was a death threat. Given the Apollo meeting two months earlier, Motown assumed that Fair Play was behind it. Company executives Gordon Prince and Ewart Abner, accompanied by FBI agents, checked the hotel suite where Gordy was to stay. "There was even a phony run from the airport that we were going to do," recalled Prince, "with someone else instead of Berry." Discretion proved to be the better part of valour: Gordy cancelled his attendance, while arranging for a $25,000 donation to NATRA from Motown.

Courtesy of Barney Ales

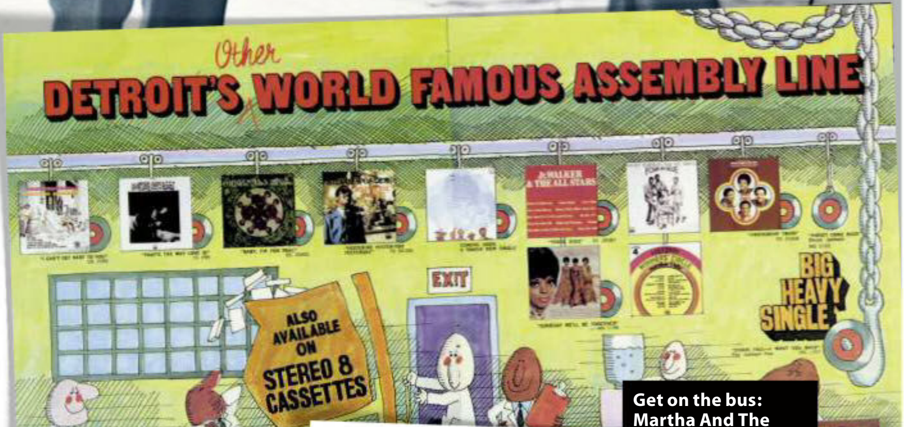
IN 1969, MOTOWN WAS 10 YEARS into its cause, having become the most successful and influential black-owned enterprise in the entire music industry – and was soon to be codified as the largest black-owned business in the US. By this time, its artists were household names, known and recognised by millions of Americans, in part because of the 18 Number 1 singles the firm had scored since 1961. The 'Motown Sound' had become a powerful force in popular music, selling in remarkable quantities even as competitors hustled to duplicate its dynamic, sophisticated, assembly-line output and to analyse the appeal of its hitmakers: Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, The Temptations, Smokey Robinson And The Miracles, The Four Tops, Martha And The Vandellas and, of course, the all-conquering Supremes, fronted by Gordy's brightest star, Diana Ross.

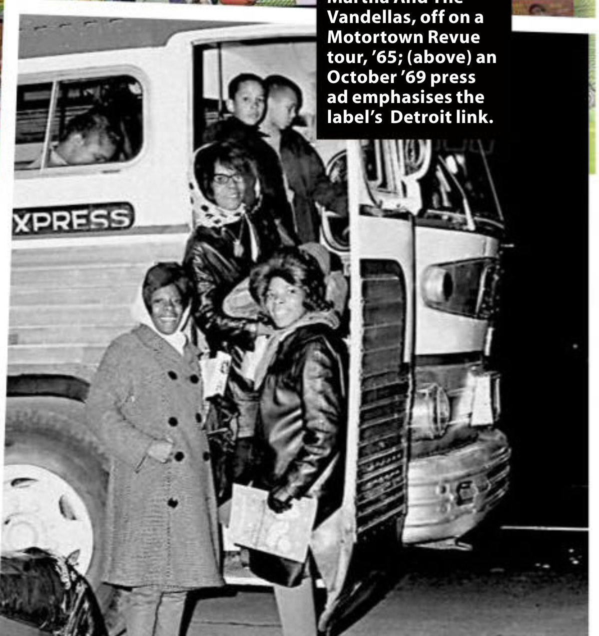
These achievements were due to more than the music, the charisma of the artists and the determination of Berry Gordy. He preferred the creative side of music – songwriting, producing – and in this, he could be demanding, even controlling. By contrast, he showed little interest in back-office functions, although he was well aware that competence in sales, promotion, accounting and contracts was essential. At first, strapped for cash, he depended on family. His sister Loucye initially dealt with pressing plants and dis-

Temptations: Courtesy of Motown Records Archives, courtesy of Back Pages Ltd, courtesy of the Paul Nixon Collection

tributors, paying out and collecting money. Still, Gordy was pragmatic. He knew that if Motown was to gain airplay beyond the R&B-formatted stations which supported its initial releases, and was to collect the receivables due when sales followed airplay, he needed people with relationships at Top 40 stations and – as importantly – with the predominantly white distributors who controlled access to record stores.

Gordy's smartest business move in those fledgling years was to recruit an engaging, ambitious white salesman in his mid-twenties: Baldassare (Barney) Ales, son of an immigrant Sicilian father and a Michigan-born mother. During four years at the Detroit branch of industry major Capitol Records, Ales rose from stock boy to head of promotion, serving an artist roster ranging from Nat 'King' Cole to Gene Vincent. After a spell at Warner Bros, he became sales manager at an independent Detroit distributorship, Aurora. It handled a number of R&B labels, including Tri-Phi, the small imprint ➢


DETROIT'S Other WORLD FAMOUS ASSEMBLY LINE
Jr. WALKER & THE ALL STARS
EXIT
BIG HEAVY SINGLE
ALSO AVAILABLE ON STEREO 8 CASSETTES



Get on the bus: Martha And The Vandellas, off on a Motortown Revue tour, '65; (above) an October '69 press ad emphasises the label's Detroit link.

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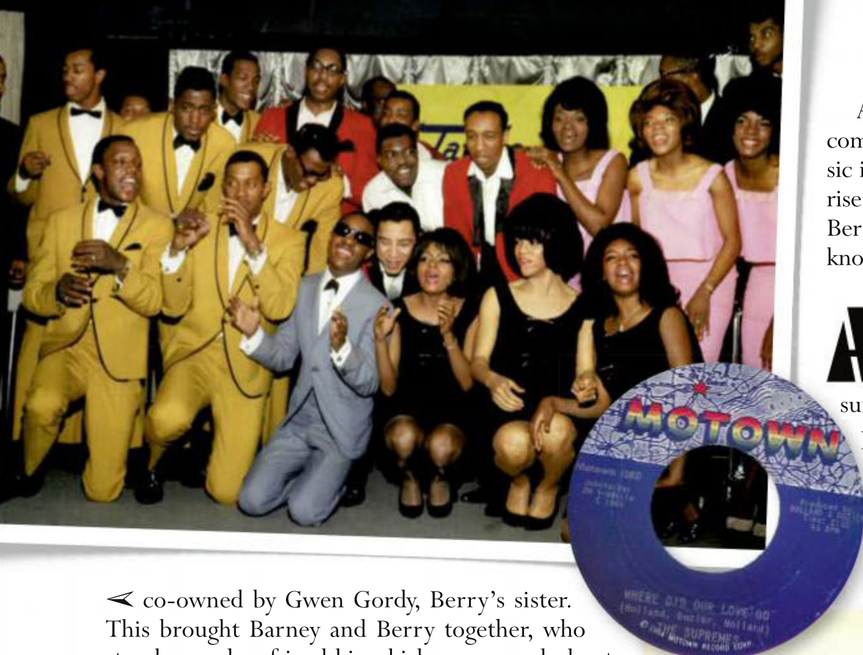
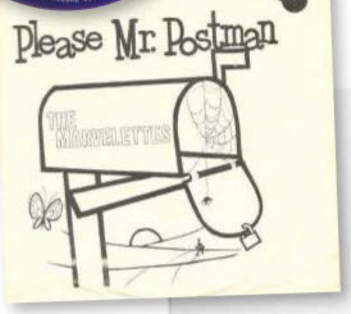
Mob rumou s] too much. We
g t our mone quicker fr
stributor ” **BERRY GOR**





< co-owned by Gwen Gordy, Berry's sister. This brought Barney and Berry together, who struck up a close friendship which was as much about socialising as business – and in an era of segregation, this was notable, even in a Northern city like Detroit. When Gordy offered him a full-time job at Motown in 1961 as head of sales, Ales recalled, "My parents couldn't understand why I would leave Aurora to go with a black guy."

THE COMBINATION OF ALES' DISTRIBUTION experience and his relationships with disc jockeys was immediately put to good effect, and Motown scored its first Number 1 on the pop charts (The Marvelettes' Please Mr Postman) by the end of 1961. Ales drove the group to Philadelphia for an appearance on Dick Clark's American Bandstand, but first had to visit the teenagers' high school in Inkster, Michigan, to get permission from the principal. Later, he headed west to San Francisco for a Cow Palace concert featuring The Marvelettes and another new Motown hitmaker, Eddie Holland. "We flew – it would always be coach – and I took [lead singer] Gladys Horton and Eddie." Ales paid four Bay Area girls to sing behind Horton. "We didn't have the money to fly the whole group from Detroit."

In those days, cash flow was everything. Ales knew of distributors who deliberately looked for start-up labels as clients, so they wouldn't have to pay the newcomers unless they had follow-up hits. "Naturally, I had a bad attitude if people didn't pay me," he said. Once, he found himself arguing furiously with a distributor. "He said to me, 'Did your mother bring you up an idiot?' I went crazy. I told him, I'll throw you right out that window. My mother is very close to me."

Ales was a tall, imposing presence, with physical strength (as a youth, he had worked the nightshift at Chrysler's Dodge main plant, lifting hot fenders across assembly lines). At another time, Ales advised one of his staff to buy a gun when visiting a Motown distributor in Pittsburgh; it was a joke, but only just. Another of Ales' promotion people, if so instructed, already had his own pistol to carry.

Not that arms were confined to the backroom staff. British-based Motown executive John Marshall had to deal with the arrest of The Four Tops' Levi Stubbs in London in 1970 for possessing drugs – and ammunition. "The police found bullets in his luggage," Marshall remembered. "That wouldn't have surprised me. There were lots of guns in Detroit."

As Barney Ales' importance to Motown became evident and the company's hit ratio started to impress and then confound the music industry, his stature grew. Meanwhile, his Italian heritage gave rise to rumours about friends and acquaintances. "You know," said Berry Gordy, "he never really minded that too much, because, you know, we got our money a little quicker from distributors."

ALES PLAYED ANOTHER KEY ROLE WHEN MOTOWN arrived at one of its most important crossroads: The Supremes' debut at the Copacabana. This was during the summer of 1965, one year after the group had exploded into popular culture with their first Number 1 record, Where Did Our Love Go, followed by another, and yet another – ultimately for a total of five consecutive chart-toppers. "Most of those records went to pop [radio] stronger, and often before they went to R&B," said Eddie Holland of the Holland/Dozier/Holland triumvirate, which created that succession of Supremes hits. "There's no way that would have happened without Barney. That also deals with Berry Gordy's insight and intelligence in recognising him, and using that talent."

Are we rolling? Berry Gordy (far left) keeps an eye on (from left) Chris Clark, Stevie Wonder and Lamont Dozier in the studio; (top left, from left) The Temptations, The Miracles, Stevie Wonder, The Supremes and Martha And The Vandellas celebrate the launch of Tamla-Motown at EMI, London, March 1966.

Courtesy of the Paul Nixon Collection and Miss Chris Clark (2)

> "The police found bullets in Levi Stubbs' luggage. There were lots of guns in Detroit."
> Motown exec **JOHN MARSHALL**

But Gordy was also coveting the middle-of-the-road, because he understood that it was where career longevity for his artists could be achieved. To advance from the chitlin' circuit into mainstream nightclubs across the US, an act had first to succeed at the Copa. It was the high ground of American entertainment. For Gordy, The Supremes were to be his assault troops. The Copacabana was also the low ground: a nightclub with a basement entrance underneath an unattractive hotel, flavoured with the smell of the previous night's dinners. It was low ground for another reason: links to organised crime. Opened in 1940, the venue was declared to be "Monte Proser's Copacabana," but Proser reputedly ran the club for Frank Costello, an Italian known as the Prime Minister of the Underworld, who was long associated with New York's Genovese crime family.

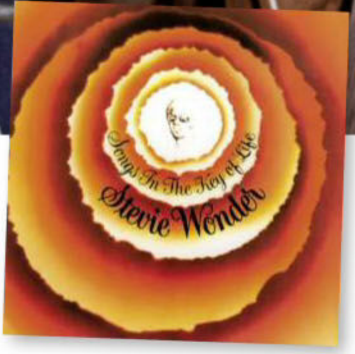
The Supremes were shoehorned into the Copa in the summer of '65. It was a tough sell. Manager Jules Podell was not especially fond of this generation of music makers, but he accepted them as long as they brought in customers. "It wasn't something Podell was happy doing," Ales confirmed. "It was done more as a favour." He and an associate had drinks with Podell upstairs in the adjacent Hotel Fourteen. "The guy with me said to Jules that it would be worthwhile to book them. If there was any money lost, it would be taken care of. I mean, everybody knew that Jules was connected."

The outcome was a commercial and critical triumph, validating the time and effort put in by Gordy and his team behind the scenes. The opening night on July 29, 1965, was a madhouse. Celebrity guests jostled for prime position among the Copa's regular customers, who were mostly white, in their forties and fifties. Polished and prepared to within an inch of their lives, Diana Ross, Mary Wilson and Florence Ballard delivered. "While The Supremes will probably keep their teenage following for some time," declared Billboard, "there appears little question that the act will last a lot longer as staple adult fare, not too dependent on the chart position of their latest single."

MOTOWN'S ACCEPTANCE INTO THE HEART OF American popular culture in the '60s depended on at least one other platform of supreme importance: The Ed Sullivan Show. This weekly entertainment smorgasbord on the CBS-TV network was one of the most-watched programmes in the country. Its virtues were the implied seal of approval from a showbiz leader and an audience in the tens of millions, as The Beatles found when Sullivan hosted their US television debut in February 1964.

"His was the kind of programme every American watched on ➢

Going to a go-go: on-stage in a Detroit club, 1964 (from left) The Four Tops' Levi Stubbs, Motown songwriter/producer Ivy Jo Hunter, Stevie Wonder and Marvin Gaye.



≺ Sundays," said The Supremes' Mary Wilson. It reinforced the family structure, bringing together parents and children. "You didn't have a lot of programmes with black people on them," she added, "and, all of a sudden, here's this musical programme that everyone watched, whether you were black or white. And you started seeing more black people on it." When that included The Supremes, "it was like the first time you could see three beautiful black women on television." Once, while the group was performing in Miami, a white woman told Wilson that every time The Supremes appeared on Sullivan, "I allow my family to watch you." Hearing of that remark, Wilson's militant brother saw red. "I told him, You know what she means. Before that, white people didn't want to watch and *adore* black people. That's what Ed Sullivan brought to the table."

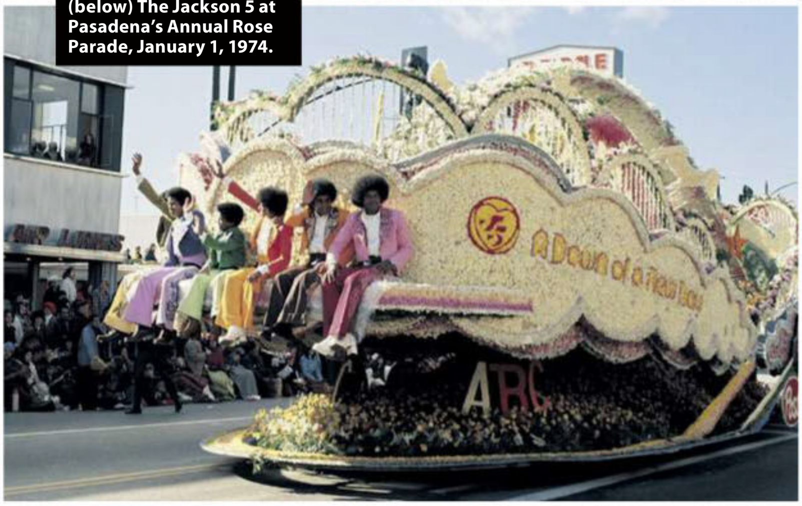
Diana Ross and The Supremes, the first and most frequent Motown guests, made 18 appearances on Ed Sullivan from 1964-1969. TV's pop kingmaker also booked Martha And The Vandellas, Smokey Robinson And The Miracles, The Temptations, The Four Tops, Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye and The Jackson 5. "Once you made that show, you knew you had a star," said Barney Ales, "and album sales picked up like crazy afterwards. We had a good relationship with the producer, Bob Precht. He liked Motown – and Esther [Edwards] used to take the dressing room keys afterwards as souvenirs." Edwards, another Gordy sister, headed Motown's artist management arm.

BUT BY THE LATE '60s SULLIVAN'S SHOW WAS looking staid and was last broadcast on June 6, 1971. The challenge of change was thrown at Gordy's feet, too. His decision to transfer Motown from Detroit to Los Angeles in 1972 was logical in terms of ambition: TV and movies offered tempting opportunities. But the move loosened control of the business which Gordy and backroom believers such as Ales and Edwards had exercised so effectively in their home city. "Los Angeles altered Motown completely," said Ales. It certainly destroyed Marvin Gaye, in his opinion. "Sometimes you had to be the artists' father, sometimes you had to be their friend," he noted. "Sometimes you had to kick them in the ass."

In Los Angeles, Berry Gordy depended on new people and outside consultants, while the artists' circle of acquaintances widened, too. The '70s saw many departures: The Four Tops, Gladys Knight And The Pips, The Miracles (without Smokey), The Jackson 5 (without Jermaine), The Temptations and, by the end of the decade, Gaye. Yet Gordy retained his greatest star, Stevie Wonder, by giving him creative autonomy and a rich contract – first in 1971, when Wonder turned 21, and then again in 1976, when Ales successfully renegotated with the superstar's eccentric lawyer, Johanan Vigoda.

Wonder wanted Motown to survive, yet reaching agreement on terms acceptable to both sides was a challenge. At his first business meeting with Ales, Vigoda told him that "we were like two scorpions: each of us could kill the other, but it didn't make any sense." Vigoda was a challenge in himself. Chaotic in manner and appearance, he spilled energy and spat out sunflower seeds, carried his work in ageing airline bags, and was known for losing his car keys – a particular problem in Los Angeles. Nonetheless, he was a brilliant advocate for Wonder, who had complete confidence in him.

In 1971, Vigoda had obtained full creative control for his client,



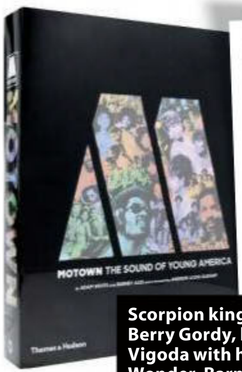
Let the sunshine in: (above, from left) Supremes Florence, Mary and Diana in Manchester Square near EMI's London offices, October 1964; (below) The Jackson 5 at Pasadena's Annual Rose Parade, January 1, 1974.

facilitating an extraordinary run of masterpieces: *Music Of My Mind*, *Talking Book*, *Innervisions* and *Fulfillingness' First Finale*. The 1976 pact was more about the money. Ales was adamant about retaining foreign rights to the superstar's output and globally administering his song catalogue, but willing to raise the royalty rate to 25 per cent – a princely sum then – and to guarantee at least $23 million (by today's rates) in earnings. The scorpions settled their differences; Wonder was to stay at Motown.

What followed was arguably his greatest work, *Songs In The Key Of Life* – the first album by an American musician to enter the Billboard charts at Number 1. The music was peerless but it was as much a distribution coup, with Ales gathering the east coast buyers in Chicago and buttering them up with individual phone calls from a reluctant Gordy.

"Berry told them how great they were," says Ales. "I remember that Harry Apostolaris from New York was so thrilled that he talked to Berry personally. After they got done talking, I said, I think you're entitled to buy another 25,000!"

Songs In The Key Of Life presided at Billboard's summit for only one week fewer than *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. It was a fitting monument to Motown's magic, Gordy's vision, and the steely scrappiness of his backroom believers.

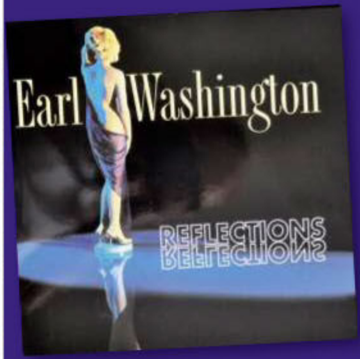


Motown: The Sound Of Young America by Adam White with Barney Ales is published in hardback by Thames & Hudson on March 14, priced £39.95.

Courtesy of EMI Group Archive Trust (3), courtesy of Barney Ales

MOTOWN MISSTEPS

Five times BERRY GORDY's Midas touch deserted him, by ADAM WHITE.



JAZZ

Berry Gordy's love of the music and the calibre of Motown's musicians should have blessed the Workshop Jazz label with success. But its nine LPs in 1963-64 sold insufficient copies, and the profit-minded boss pulled the plug.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

SAMMY DAVIS Jr

Motown issued one, poor-selling album by popular personality/singer Davis, and hyped a 1970 label venture with him called Ecology. One single resulted, not a hit. Marvin Gaye wrote Sammy some songs, but he never recorded them.

CC RIDES AGAIN

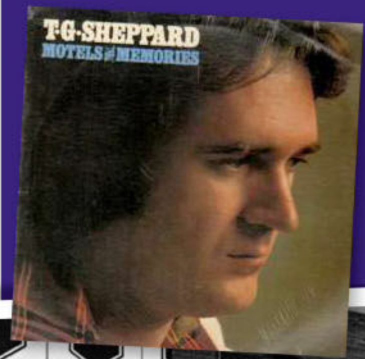
WEED RECORDS

Perhaps not so much a misstep as an in-joke. The label released an unloved album by the gorgeous and gifted Chris Clark in 1969, but its slogan was the best: "Your Favourite Artists Are On Weed."

STOKELY CARMICHAEL
FREE HUEY!
BLACK FORUM

BLACK FORUM

In 1970, Berry Gordy finally tuned into black militancy with this (mostly) spoken-word label. Eight LPs, including *Free Huey!* by Black Power firebrand Stokely Carmichael, were released in total. Motown's (mostly) white distributors were not interested.



COUNTRY MUSIC

Motown tried this twice via its Mel-O-Dy and Melodyland labels, in the '60s and '70s, respectively. They had some talented artists – Dorsey Burnette, T.G. Sheppard – but the music was out of the company's comfort zone, and could not yield a return on its investment.

Scorpion kings: (from left) Berry Gordy, lawyer Johanan Vigoda with his client Stevie Wonder, Barney Ales; (inset opposite page) the classic album that resulted.

BOWIE 1947-2016

GOLDEN YEARS

WHEN **DAVID BOWIE** DIED ON JANUARY 10, HE LEFT A HOLE IN OUR LIVES BUT A CREATIVE EXAMPLE THAT WILL SHINE FOREVER.

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INCLUDING

SIOUXSIE SIOUX WHY WE ARE ALL BOWIE PEOPLE NOW P**70**

BOWIE ON BOWIE AND ON THE VELVET UNDERGROUND, AND COCAINE, AND BARNACLES P**72**

JON SAVAGE COMPILES BOWIE'S DEFINING CUTS P**84**

TONY VISCONTI BOWIE'S LAST STAND P**86**

PORTRAIT BY **FRANK W OCKENFELS III**

"LIFE-CHANGING. LIFE-SAVING. GROUNDBREAKING..."

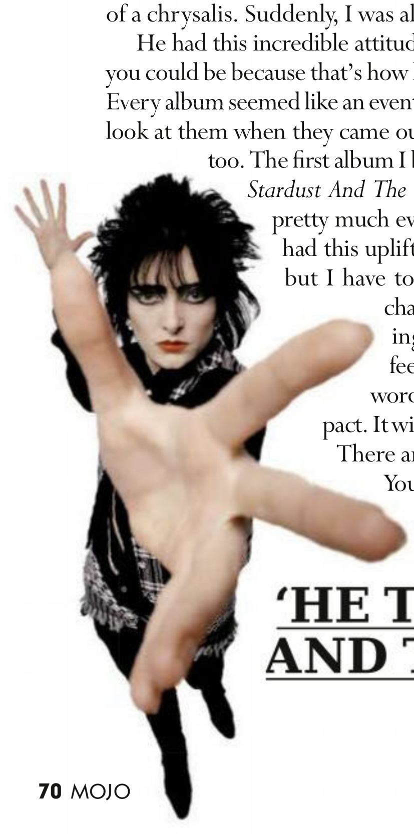
THE ETERNAL GENIUS OF **DAVID BOWIE**. CELEBRATED BY **SIOUXSIE SIOUX**.

"I CAN SAY, HAND ON HEART, THAT I DON'T KNOW where I'd be if it wasn't for David Bowie. When so-called punk was happening, a lot of the boys in bands wouldn't admit to being into him, but I don't think punk would have happened without him. To me, his influence was very, very personal.

He had the ability to speak a language no one had spoken before: that ability to openly say "you're not alone" to millions of disaffected teenagers growing up [in the early '70s] and who thought that nothing mattered. He gave people the courage to be who they wanted to be, as well as the courage to be who you actually are. For someone to be able to give people that creative strength is a truly amazing thing.

He was also generous with other artists too and really championed them. Without him we would never have heard Lou Reed and The Velvet Underground, or Iggy Pop. Who else would have done that? Most people would have been far more competitive rather than wanting to be supportive. As an artist he had a remarkable imagination and you can't buy that. You can't give that to anyone either, but you can inspire them to use their own imagination, which is exactly what he did. When I first saw him [performing Starman on Top Of The Pops in 1972] I was really ill and in a hospital TV room. It was like I was being woken up, like being let out of a chrysalis. Suddenly, I was allowed to just *become*.

He had this incredible attitude that made you want to be the best you could be because that's how he was: always striving to be the best. Every album seemed like an event. You would genuinely wait for them, look at them when they came out, absorb them and study the sleeve too. The first album I bought was *The Rise And Fall Of Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars* [1972], and then pretty much every one after that. What he did just had this uplifting effect on you. I've said it before but I have to say it again, what he did was life-changing, life-saving and ground-breaking on so many occasions. It almost feels ridiculous talking about it, because words aren't enough to describe his impact. It will all look a bit silly in black and white. There are so many areas that he influenced. You found yourself immersed in what he did. The idea of things being unisex didn't exist before him. Then, suddenly it was everywhere. You had unisex hairdressers, and unisex *everything*. How girls should be, how boys should be, he didn't care – he just threw it all up in the air and it landed where it landed. He told us to make our own rules, and then he threw his own rules away again and again. It was that sense of constant change that seemed so exciting.



He was the most important artist of the 20th century because he was so accessible to young people at a really crucial time. He used the platform of pop music as a vehicle for so many ideas, but it meant that they were open for everyone to interpret in their own way.

I still go back and rediscover his albums. [1974's] *Diamond Dogs*, for instance. It's not nostalgia. It's music that still sounds vital and modern. When *Low* came out [January 1977] it was so groundbreaking. That album – and the other two [*"Heroes"*, October 1977; *Lodger*, May 1979] – weren't that well received when they came out. I was so angry about that at the time. Then I think his record company even tried to drop him. Can you imagine! These people should have known better. But they didn't, did they?

HE HAD THAT GLOBAL SUCCESS [IN THE '80s] BUT HE chose to turn his back on it. I think he realised that sometimes you need to take what you need but not necessarily what people *think* you need. It seems to me that he didn't want to stop the journey he was on, to stop growing.

He invited us to support him in Anaheim on the Glass Spider tour in 1987. By then we hardly supported anyone, but when that offer came in we couldn't refuse. He watched us from the side of the stage – which he didn't have to do – and then we met him. There's that great story of him taking parts of the Glass Spider stage set to the desert and firebombing it all. But among all the excess of that tour, people forget that in the middle of the set he did [a cover of Jacques Brel's] My Death. He broke it down completely and, my God, it was so powerful. And that was at the peak of his global success.

The day the news of his death was announced I didn't know about it at first. I had the radio on and a news programme came on. I couldn't believe it, and I was in shock so I turned on the TV. It was around one o'clock and there it was. I had stuff to do but I found that I simply couldn't do it. I was a complete mess.

His legacy – and I wish there was a better word for it – won't dissipate. If anything, it has become more poignant and significant as time goes on. These days we're bombarded with so much all the time but, among that whole sense of everything happening all the time, he just has this power to amaze, and that will never, ever disappear.

As told to Phil Alexander

'HE TOLD US TO MAKE OUR OWN RULES, AND THEN HE THREW HIS OWN RULES AWAY AGAIN AND AGAIN."

©Mick Rock 1973, 2016, Getty Images

"The idea of things being unisex didn't exist before him," says Siouxsie Sioux (opposite): Bowie on-stage in Scotland, 1973, with earring.

BOWIE ON BOWIE

IN 2002, **DAVID BOWIE** AGREED TO EDIT THE 104th EDITION OF MOJO. HE THREW HIMSELF INTO THE TASK WITH TRADEMARK ENERGY, SHARING FAVE RAVES PAST AND PRESENT – THE VELVET UNDERGROUND, THE LEGENDARY STARDUST COWBOY, MOUSE ON MARS – AND SUBMITTING TO A RARE AND REVEALING RETROSPECTIVE INTERVIEW CENTRING ON THE WHIRLWIND YEARS OF 1972-76. IN THE PROCESS, MOJO LEARNED A LESSON IT WOULDN'T FORGET ABOUT BOWIE'S HIGH STANDARDS. "HOW DO YOU GUYS GET YOUR MAGAZINE OUT?" HE CHIDED **PAUL DU NOYER**.

IT'S MAYDAY 2002, AND THE GOOD SHIP DAVID BOWIE is emitting serious distress signals. He has agreed to guest-edit the next issue of MOJO, but it's one of those jobs that always looks easier than it really is. For one thing, he didn't get the review copy of the new Oasis album that he'd been promised. And now I'm on the phone to New York, trying to coax him into a *second* interview.

David Bowie is not best pleased.

We'd already talked about his own new album, *Heathen*. That went well enough. He exhibited the patience of an artist with fresh product to promote. Besides, it was a fine record (as posterity is starting to notice). Bowie's final years were not destined to be his busiest, but his 21st century output never settled for anything that was mediocre, formulaic or expected.

But as well as *Heathen*, MOJO wanted material about his earlier work, specifically that glorious run from 1972's *Ziggy Stardust* to *Station To Station* in 1976. And so I have to break this editorial decision to him.

"Brilliant! Mega!"
Noel reviews Oasis
PLUS: Flaming Lips, Yoko, Lovin' Spoonful, Dylan live
JULY
MOJO
The Music Magazine
"There was nothing I wouldn't try"
BOWIE
HEDONIST. VISIONARY. MAGAZINE EDITOR!
DAVID BOWIE EDITS MOJO

"This is really going on and on," he snaps. Awkward silence down the transatlantic line. "I finished all my deadlines for this editor thing on the 13th of last month and waiting for you guys to get your stuff over to me has really put things out. So I have to complain just before we start out. Everything was so late from you guys."

Oh God. So this is what it's like to get a bollocking off The Dame. I picture an exhalation of cigarette smoke, so fierce it almost seeps through the receiver. In the background, his other phone is ringing. "Oh shut up!" he shouts. "It's been a hell of a morning. They were Beckett's last words, you know: What a morning…"

He sighs again. Then, after many soothing noises from me, Bowie remembers he is, above all, an old-fashioned English gentleman. The other phone is silenced. His cultured south London twang is once more becalmed and he proceeds to rabbit away most pleasantly. He unboxes his memories of Ziggy, Aladdin, Thomas Jerome Newton, the Thin White Duke and all the phantasmic visions who stepped – as immortally as any characters from Dickens – into our collective imagination. And changed our lives.

CHIEF AMONG THEM WAS ZIGGY STARDUST. HE played guitar, he prowled a desolate London landscape in a quilted jumpsuit, he let the children boogie and he became a rock'n'roll suicide. Or did he? Not only was *Ziggy Stardust* aborted as a musical: the storyline of his adventures is probably too fragmented to qualify even as a concept album.

"There was a *bit* of a narrative," Bowie contends, "a slight arc, and my intention was to fill it in more later. And I never got round to it because before I knew where I was we'd recorded the damn thing. There was no time to wait.

"I'm glad in the long run that I just left it like that. Because I never drew a template for a storyline too clearly, it left so much room for audience interpretation. A couple of years ago I was seriously near to putting something together. But every time I got close to defining him more, he seemed to become less than what he was before. So I left it. Project abandoned." ➢

"I FORCED MYSELF TO BE A GOOD SONGWRITER, AND I BECAME A GOOD SONGWRITER. BUT I HAD NO NATURAL TALENTS WHATSOEVER."

His 21st century output never settled for the mediocre, formulaic or expected: David Bowie at the time of *Heathen*.

PHILIPS
SPACE ODDITY
WILD EYED BOY FROM FREECLOUD
DAVID BOWIE
RCA
David Bowie
Ashes to ashes

≺ The credible "rock musical" remains an elusive beast to this day, and Bowie himself did not pick up the gauntlet (not even Lazarus quite qualifies). "No, I'm as guilty as anyone. Possibly because of my natural impatience, I just don't discipline myself enough to see something through. *Diamond Dogs*, I suppose, got near that. It was my usual basket of apocalyptic visions, isolation, being terribly miserable…"

From Ziggy's opener, Five Years, through to Diamond Dogs and beyond, the apocalyptic strain recurs in his work – or, if not quite apocalyptic, then dystopian.

"Dystopian, absolutely," he smirks. "I went to the doctors for it. You always think you've got an ulcer but it's just heartburn… No, in retrospect, it *has* been a strong theme in the work that I've done down the years. In fact, I think if there is any consistency to what I do, it's going to be the lyrical content. I'm saying the same thing a lot, which is about this sense of self-destruction. I think you can see the apocalyptic thing as the manifestation of an interior problem. There's a real nagging anxiety in there somewhere, and I probably develop those anxieties in a 'faction' structure."

As an example of his 'faction'-writing, Bowie offers that singular astronaut Major Tom, who first appeared in his 1969 hit Space Oddity, and re-emerged 11 years later in Ashes To Ashes: "The second time around there were elements of my really wanting to be clean of drugs. I meta-morphed all that into the Major Tom character, so it's partially autobiographical. But not completely so: there's a fantasy element in it as well. It probably came from my wanting to be healthy again. Definitely. And the first time around it wasn't. The first time around it was merely about feeling lonely. But then the limpets of time grabbed hold of the hull of my ship; it was de-barnacling by the time I got round to Ashes To Ashes. No, leave all this out, actually, the barnacles… Jesus Christ!"

Yes, you've gone a bit Captain Birdseye.

"I know. Davy Jones's locker!"

THE DAVY JONES WHO BECAME DAVID BOWIE CHOSE rock music, he now suggests, because it was a career where he could take all his interests with him. "You couldn't really do that in accounting. Because I loved art and I loved theatre and the ways we express ourselves as a culture, I really thought rock music was a great way of not having to relinquish my hold on any of those things. I could drag square pegs into round holes: butcher the pegs away until they fitted. It's kind of what I attempted to do: a bit of sci-fi, a bit of kabuki here, a little bit of German Expressionism there. It was like having my friends around me."

With the solitary exception of Space Oddity, (and by '72 it was fast receding in the public memory), Bowie's career took an age to warm up. At the time of his breakthrough with *Ziggy Stardust*, he'd been making records for eight years without a chart placing – as Davie Jones & The King Bees, Davy Jones, The Manish Boys and, from 1966, as David Bowie.

"Well, it took me a long time to get it right," he states. "I didn't know how to write a song, I wasn't particularly good at it. I forced myself to be a good songwriter, and I became a good songwriter. But I had no natural talents whatsoever. I made a job of work at getting good. And the only way I could learn was see how other people did it. I wasn't one of those guys who came out of the womb like Marc [a reference to Bolan's T.Rex song, Cosmic Dancer: "I danced myself right out the womb"]. "I wasn't dancing, I was stumbling around."

Marc Bolan was the nearest thing to a real-life role model for Bowie as he sketched out *Ziggy Stardust*: in the year the album was conceived, 1971, T.Rex were at the height of their powers. Bowie's old friend was Britain's first sensation of the new era: a boy who had dreamed a whole persona for himself, and who seemed to become an overnight rock'n'roll star by sheer force of willpower.

"Oh yeah! Boley struck it big, and we were all green with envy. It was terrible: we fell out for about six months. It was [sulky mutter] 'He's doing *much* better than I am.' And he got all sniffy about us who were still down in the basement. But we got over that.

"You know how we first met? It's so funny. We both had this manager in the mid-'60s [Les Conn]. Marc was very much the Mod and I was sort of neo-beat-hippy, though I hated the idea of hippy because my brother had told me about beatniks and they seemed far sexier. Both Marc and I were out of work, and we met when we were poured into the manager's office to whitewash the walls.

"So there's me and this Mod whitewashing Les's office. And he goes, 'Where d'you get those shoes, man?' (*Bowie does a perfect impression of Bolan's fey but icily determined manner*) 'Where d'you get your shirt?' We immediately started talking about clothes and sewing machines. 'Oh I'm gonna be a singer and I'm gonna be so big you're not gonna believe it, man.' Oh, right! Well I'll probably write a musical for you one day then, 'cos I'm gonna be the greatest writer ever. 'No, no, man, you've gotta hear my stuff 'cos I write great things. And I knew a wizard in Paris,' and it was all this. Just whitewashing walls in our manager's office!"

Between Bolan's amazing success, and the public indifference to his own *Hunky Dory* (released in late 1971, it did not pick up serious sales until the *Ziggy Stardust* era), was Bowie ever pessimistic at this point?

"No, I never ever felt that, because I still liked the process. I liked writing and recording. It was a lot of fun for a kid. I might have had moments of, God, I don't think anything is ever going to happen for me. But I would bounce up pretty fast."

Sure enough, Bowie bounced up incredibly fast in 1972. No sooner was *Hunky Dory* in the shops than he'd shorn off the golden tresses; he toured Britain with a brand new look and a set of songs from his next LP, already in the can. In Ziggy Stardust, the ➢

"I HAD AN UNBEARABLE SHYNESS; IT WAS MUCH EASIER FOR ME TO KEEP ON WITH THE ZIGGY THING, OFF THE STAGE AS WELL AS ON."

Rex, Getty Images

Ziggy goes to New York, 1973: "There was a point that year where in knew it was all over. I didn't want to be trapped in this character all my life"; (opposite) Gadzooks! Davy Jones at the BBC gets coiffed for his appearance on the show of that name, 1965.

Thin White Duke: Bowie keeps his hat on visiting New Mexico's White Sands in the mid '70s.

transgender space boy who becomes a rock'n'roll star, Bowie had spawned a self-fulfilling prophecy.

"It became apparent to me that… I had an unbearable shyness; it was much easier for me to keep on with the Ziggy thing, off the stage as well as on the stage. It also seemed a lot of fun, a really fun deceit. Who was David Bowie and who was Ziggy Stardust? But I think it was motivated by shyness as much as anything. It was so much easier for me to be Ziggy."

EVEN BEFORE HE HIT BIG WITH *ZIGGY*'S PREVIEW single Starman, Bowie began to shape the 1972 agenda through a Melody Maker interview in February of that year, wherein he declared he was gay. The cat was suddenly among the pigeons. Why did you say it?

"I found I was able to get a lot of tension off my shoulders by almost 'outing' myself in the press in that way, in very early circumstances. So I wasn't going to get people crawling out the woodwork saying (*seedy, muck-raking voice*): 'I'll tell you something about David Bowie that you don't know…' I wasn't going to have any of that. I knew that at some point I was going to have to say something about my life. And, again, Ziggy enabled me to make things more comfortable for myself. There was an excitement that the age of exploration was really finally here. Which is

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BOWIE WRITES #1

"I CHOKED, I GASPED IN AWE."

THE LEGENDARY STARDUST COWBOY, OR HOW ZIGGY GOT HIS SURNAME.

BY DAVID BOWIE.

NORMAN CARL ODAM was born in September 1947 in Lubbock, Texas to Utahonna Beauchamp and Carl Bunyan Odam. He grew to be a guitar lovin' songster who would turn up early for high school and sing his songs on the steps bringing his schoolfriends to a complete stop as they pushed passed to get to class. They were mesmerised. Some would laugh.

On leaving school, he got into his car and headed to New York. "I'm gonna be on the Ed Sullivan Show," he told everyone. He didn't have a guitar at the time and hadn't made a record but he knew what a man had to do. He got as far as Fort Worth, a little way down the road from Lubbock, which is a start. He found another guitar, jumped onto the roof of his motor and played his songs, right there in a parking lot.

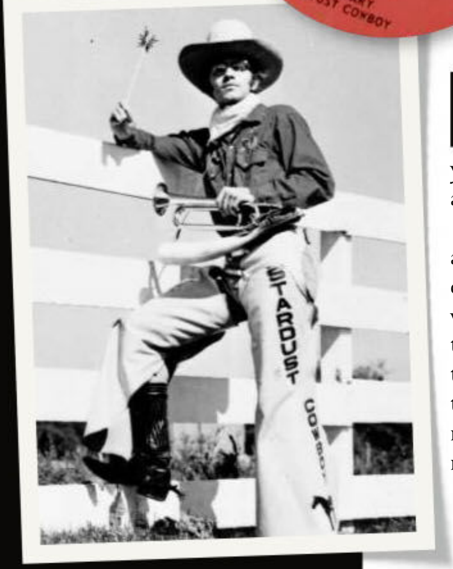
A passing vacuum cleaner repairman spotted him and took him over to the local recording studio. This was America, remember. There, a young engineer by the name of T Bone Burnett stuck up a mike in front of him and got behind the drums himself. The sound they produced was unlike any heard probably since the dawn of time. Against a superspeed but out-of-time, one-chord hurricane, Norm screamed and hollered like a vengeful Indian brave. Two minutes in, he stops playing his guitar and picks up a bugle, and honks a spluttering hail of notes that pass as the solo. "What is your name," asked Burnett. "Why, I'm the Legendary Stardust Cowboy," replied Norm. Burnett rushed the quarter-inch tape upstairs to the local radio station. (America, remember?) "Holy Faboly" or something, said the DJ. "I'm playing this at 5pm tonight."

"This is it, this is it," yelled the DJ over the airwaves at 5pm. "This is the new music." In 30 minutes, the station had more calls than in any full day in its history. "This is the new music," said the people. In less than a week, The Ledge had been signed to Mercury Records, Paralyzed was released and broke the Billboard 200. Soon after, he appeared on Laugh-In, the comical show. The people laughed at him and The Ledge stormed off. And that, really, was that.

In early 1971, Mercury executive Ron Oberman took me to one side just before my departure from the States back to the UK and furtively pressed a couple of singles into my hand. "Play these," he said. "You will never be the same again." Back home, I choked on Paralyzed, gasped in awe at Down In The Wrecking Yard and fell all about the floor at I Took A Trip On A Gemini Spaceship. It was the laugh of love. I could not believe that such a talent was unrecognised. If ever there was an equivalent to Outsider Art, this was it. The integrity, honesty and innocent, brutal focus entranced me. I became a lifelong fan and Ziggy got a surname.

mercury
72862
PARALYZED
THE LEGENDARY STARDUST COWBOY

mercury
72891
I TOOK A TRIP ON A GEMINI SPACESHIP
LEGENDARY STARDUST COWBOY



The Legendary Stardust Cowboy: "It was the laugh of love," says Bowie.

"THERE WAS NOTHING THAT I WASN'T WILLING TO TRY, TO EXPLORE AND SEE IF IT WAS REALLY PART OF MY PSYCHE OR MY NATURE."

what I was going through. It perfectly mirrored my lifestyle at the time. It was exactly what was happening to me. There was nothing that I wasn't willing to try, to explore and see if it was really part of my psyche or my nature. I was terribly exploratory in every way, not just culturally but sexually and… God, there was nothing I would leave alone. Like a – it's a terrible pun, but – like a dog with a bone, I suppose! So I buried it!"

Before we knew it, there was a bizarre pastiche of "gayness" about, whereby the most meat-and-potato bands became what was called glam rock. And some of it was pretty poor, wasn't it?

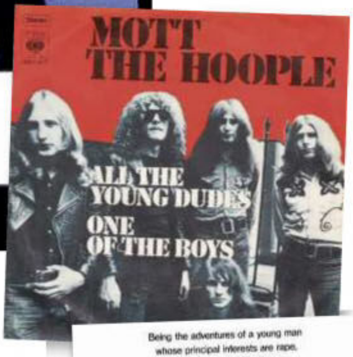
"Oh, bloody awful. Some of the stuff that we encouraged – and I have to pull Roxy into this as well – Good Lord, we should be ashamed of ourselves. It was so dire. It lent itself to really despicable performances because you had to move into really outré areas to make it work; and if it didn't work well, my God, it came crashing down. The one I think of is this American character Jobriath. Woah! What a mistake that was. Very strange guy, he was at like every concert when I first went to the States, my number one fan."

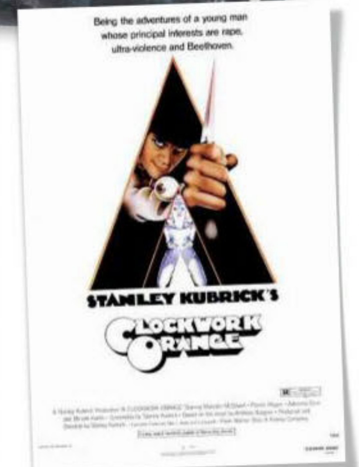
But the cultural incongruities could sometimes be delightful. Quite aside from *Ziggy* itself, Bowie wrote the absolute anthem of 1972 in the song he gave to those doughty tractor boys Mott The Hoople: All The Young Dudes.

"If they were doing OK at the time," says Bowie, "I don't think they would have wanted to link up with me, because they were quite macho, one of the early laddish bands. But things weren't good, and I literally wrote that within an hour or so of reading an article in one of the music rags that their break-up was imminent. I thought they were a fair little band, and I almost thought, This will be an interesting thing to do, let's see if I can write this song and keep them together. It sounds terribly immodest now but you go through that when you're young: 'How can I do everything? By Friday!'"

The beauty of All The Young Dudes, in a way, was that it crystallised the emergence of a new pop audience, too young to belong to Woodstock and the '60s.

"Yeah. You have to try and kill your elders. We had to develop a completely new vocabulary, as indeed is done generation after generation. The idea was taking the recent past and restructuring it in a way that we felt we had authorship of. My key 'in' was things like Clockwork Orange: that was *our* world, not the bloody hippy thing. It all made sense to me. The idea of taking a present situation and doing a futuristic forecast, and dressing it to suit: it was a uniform for an army that didn't exist. And I thought, If I took the same kind of thing, and subverted it by using pretty materials… That Clockwork Orange look became the first uniform for Ziggy, but with the violence taken out of it."




Being the adventures of a young man whose principal interests are rape, ultra-violence and Beethoven.
STANLEY KUBRICK'S
CLOCKWORK ORANGE

BUT WITH ZIGGY THE FUTURE PUNK in the ascendant, Bowie's thoughts were already on the next project; *Aladdin Sane*. "There was a point in '73," he says, "where I knew it was all over. I didn't want to be trapped in this Ziggy character all my life. And I guess what I was doing on *Aladdin Sane*, I was trying to move into the next area – but using a rather pale imitation of Ziggy as a secondary device. In my mind it was Ziggy Goes To Washington: Ziggy under the influence of America.

"*Then* I started getting into a very bad period. I mean, it really developed. My drug addiction really started, I suppose you could pin it down to the very last months of the Ziggy Stardust period. Not in a particularly heavy way, but enough to have probably worried some of the people around me. And after that, when we got into *Diamond Dogs*, that's when it was out of control. From that period onwards I was a real casualty. I've not met many people that… I was in a very serious state. You just have to look at some of the photographs of me, I cannot believe I actually survived it. You can see me at the Grammies, for instance, with Lennon, it terrifies me. It's a skull. There's not an ounce on me. I'm just a skeleton.

"I have an addictive personality. I'm quite clear on that now. And it was easily obtainable and it kept me working, 'cos I didn't use it for… I wasn't really a recreational guy, I wasn't really an out-on-the-town guy. I was much more, OK, let's write 10 different projects this week and make four or five sculptures. And I'd just stay ➢

Photo Duffy ©Duffy Archive (www.duffyphotographer.com), Getty Images

≺ up 24 hours a day until most of that was completed. I just liked doing stuff. I loved being involved in that creative moment. And I'd found a soul-mate in this drug, which helped perpetuate that creative moment."

You mean cocaine?

"Yes, cocaine. Well, speed as well, actually. The combination. And apparently a lot of elephant tranquilliser went in there too!"

In the chemically-fuelled euphoria of Bowie's first taste of super-stardom, he revisited the notion of a rock musical. The first plan was to interpret 1984, until the idea was nixed by George Orwell's widow. "So I changed track real fast and converted it into *Diamond Dogs*, which was more of an effort than Ziggy. Thinking back, we didn't do anything on stage with Ziggy: all I had was a few costume changes. It was just the songs and the trousers. That's what sold Ziggy. I think the audience filled in everything else. But *Diamond Dogs* I intended to do something for. We had a bit more money by then – though not enough, apparently: it actually put me into bankruptcy. But that kind of started a lot, the *Diamond Dogs* show, in terms of you could do something more interesting on stage than just wear blue jeans. It was quite fun, but I got bored half way through and threw the set away, so I've only got myself to blame."

STILL, IF THE GINGER MULLET WAS NOT LONG FOR this world, Bowie had not yet finished his assault upon America. Suddenly came the breathless but sophisticated "plastic soul" of *Young Americans*, accompanied by the statutory image overhaul. "I guess the dawning of it was some take on the Puerto Rican street look with a zoot suit, which kind of got it back into more conventional-looking clothing. Even though it's pretty bizarre when you see it now, the *Young Americans* thing was an attempt to turn the visual around as well as the music.

"With people like Carlos Alomar and a few of my girlfriends at the time, I was really seeing a lot of American nightlife, including the Latin clubs, and it was terribly exciting to me. It rekindled the affection for soul and R&B which I had in the '60s. In fact the reason I left my very first band, The Kon-rads, was that they wouldn't do Marvin Gaye's Can I Get A Witness?"

But it was one thing playing blue-eyed R&B covers in the Marquee Club (of the sort he revived on his 1973 covers LP *Pin-Ups*). It was quite another to record in America itself, and with black musicians too. Did he not think, 'This is a bit much,' coming over from England and doing this?

"It honestly never occurred to me," Bowie protests. "I was so hermetically sealed from everything. I was so in my own universe, that so much didn't occur to me about how other people thought. I had no idea I was even famous. I really had no idea. I just had this real creative thing going on and I went for it all the way. No, it didn't occur to me at all. I just knew it was a fantastic band. Obviously, we ran into race problems down in the South. But it was years before I realised I was one of the only white artists in rock working with a multi-race band.

"And I think what we were doing at that particular time was important. In its own way it opened doors just as *Ziggy* had opened doors. The *Young Americans* period developed an alternative approach to what you could do with rock and pop music. For me, it was another successful hybrid: of European melody against an R&B rhythm section."

In Bowie's subconscious the call of Europe was becoming audible. But first he underwent the parallel experiences of filming The Man Who Fell To Earth and recording *Station To Station*. At the same time he undertook to record a soundtrack for the movie. The exact chronology of this busy time is further confused by its having been the height – or depth – of his druggiest period.

"Did the film work come next? Ah, you tell me! Possibly! I know I had a lovely hat. It was *that* period. A fedora: the Borsalino."

The hat was one instance of another stylistic re-vamp, this time occasioned by the character, Thomas Jerome Newton, that he played in The Man Who Fell To Earth. Newton was a dapper yet inwardly-decaying space alien, maintaining a mere façade of human authenticity. It was a role the Bowie of those days seemed born to play. And as with Ziggy before him, the boundary between creator and creature grew indistinct.

"They all started to overlap each other," Bowie confesses. "The frame of mind I was in, there was no real split from one to another. To me (*yappy, cocaine-paranoid voice*), *it all made sense, man!* Oh boy, what days they were…"

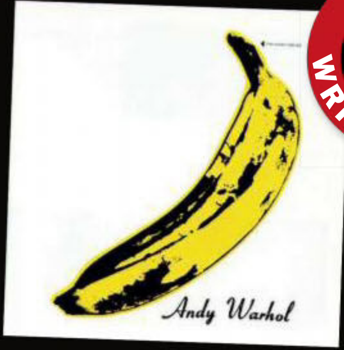
The soundtrack venture collapsed amid some rancour and dispute: "I got angry about it, with no real rational reason. I thought I should be contracted by the film com-

BOWIE WRITES #2

"THE TRACKS SQUIRMED THEIR TENTACLES AROUND MY HEAD."

HOW *THE VELVET UNDERGROUND & NICO* ROCKED MY WORLD.

BY **DAVID BOWIE**.

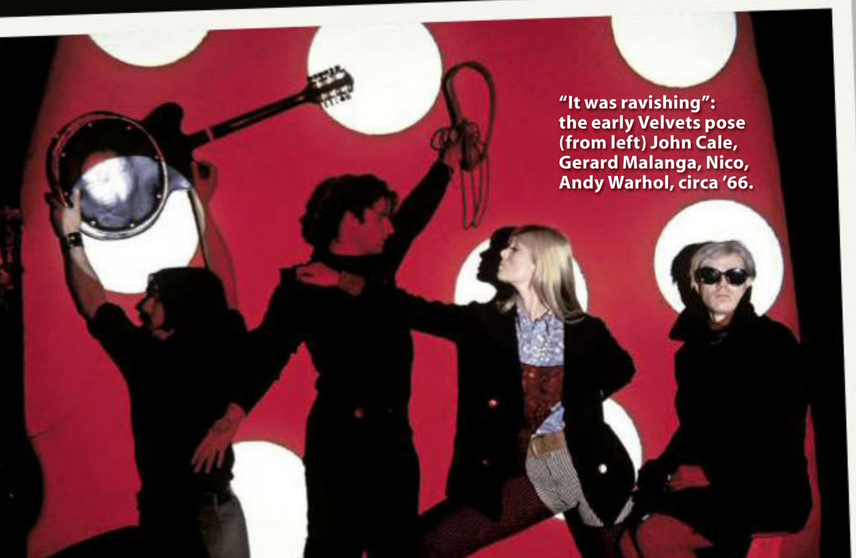


SOME TIME around the end of 1966, my then manager, Ken Pitt, came back from a trip to the US with two albums he had been given by someone in New York. Not being his particular cup of tea, he gave them to me to see what I made of them. The first was a great, rollicking noisy affair by anarchist-hippies The Fugs entitled *The Virgin Fugs*. More fun than was strictly healthy and great music for drinking and getting stoned to. But the second, a demo with the signature Warhol scrawled on it, was shattering. Everything I both felt and didn't know about rock music was opened to me on one unreleased disc. It was *The Velvet Underground & Nico*.

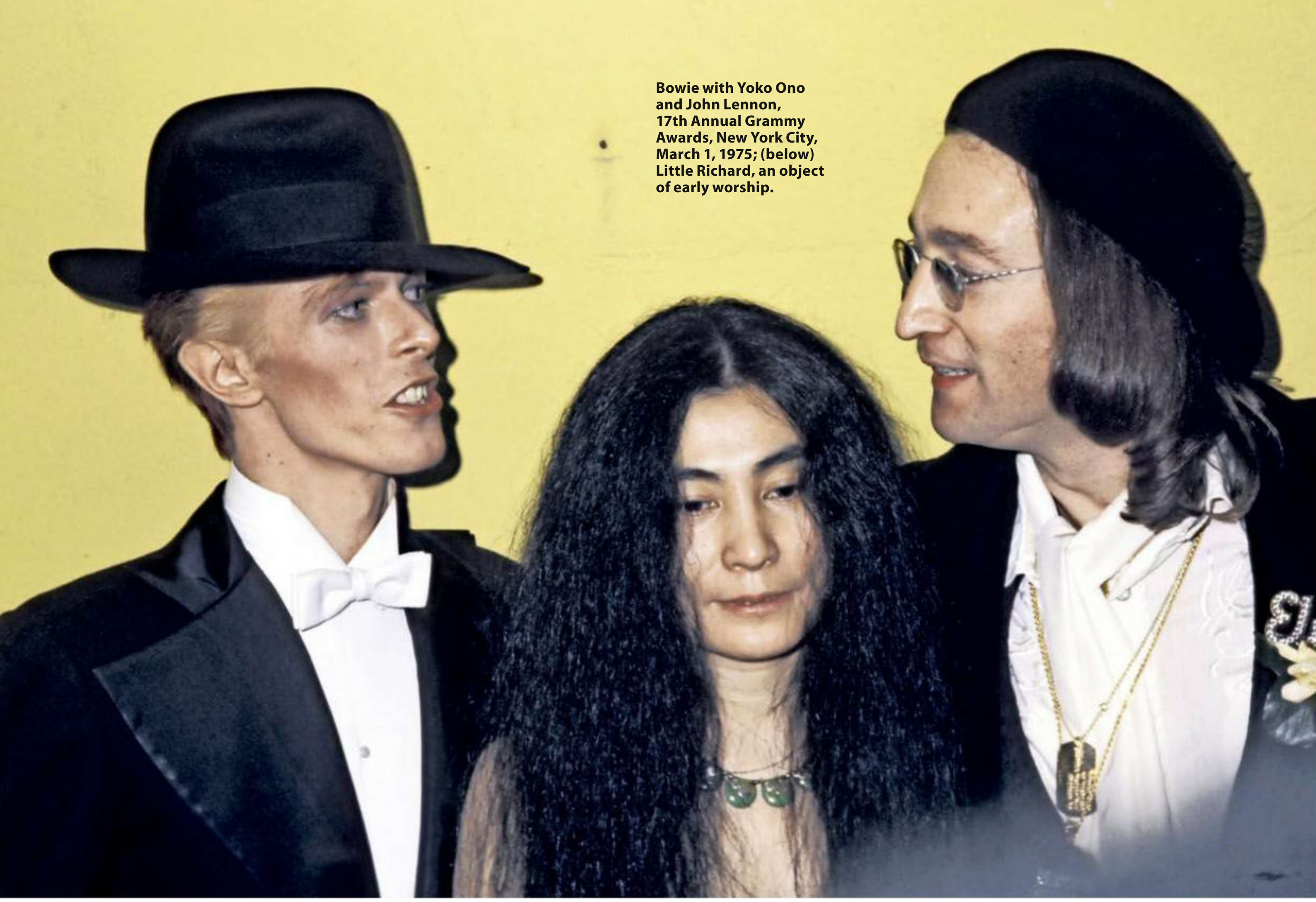
The first track glided by innocuously enough without really registering. However, from that point on, and with the opening, throbbing, sarcastic bass and guitar of I'm Waiting For The Man, the linchpin, the keystone of my ambition was driven home. This music was savagely indifferent to my feelings. It didn't care if I liked it or not. It could give a fuck. It was completely preoccupied with a world as yet unseen by my suburban eyes.

In fact, though only 19, I had seen rather a lot but had accepted it all quite enthusiastically as "a bit of a laugh". Apparently, the laughing was now over. This was a degree of cool that I had no idea was humanly sustainable and it was ravishing. One after another, the tracks squirmed and slid their contorted tentacles around my head: the evil and sexual violin on Venus In Furs, like some pre-Christian pagan revival music; the distant, icy, "fuck me if you want, I really don't give a damn" voice of Nico's Femme Fatale. What an extraordinary one-two knockout punch this was. By the time European Son was done, I was so excited I couldn't move. I sat transfixed, unable to comprehend what I'd just heard. It was late in the evening and I couldn't think of anyone to call so I played it again and then again and then…

By March of the next year, I had convinced the band I was with, The Riot Squad, to put I'm Waiting For The Man in our live setlist, making this the first time (the album, remember, was still in unreleased demo form) that a Velvets song had been covered by anyone, anywhere in the world. Lucky me. Looking back through that month's setlist, I'd like to note that we also included Zappa's It Can't Happen Here and The Fugs' Dirty Old Man. You



"It was ravishing": the early Velvets pose (from left) John Cale, Gerard Malanga, Nico, Andy Warhol, circa '66.



Bowie with Yoko Ono and John Lennon, 17th Annual Grammy Awards, New York City, March 1, 1975; (below) Little Richard, an object of early worship.

"YOU CAN SEE ME AT THE GRAMMIES WITH LENNON, IT TERRIFIES ME. IT'S A SKULL. I'M JUST A SKELETON."

pany to do the soundtrack, not just make a presentation of ideas – a stupid, juvenile reason but I kind of walked away from it. Ola Hudson – who in fact was Guns N'Roses guitarist Slash's mum – she was my girlfriend, you see. I sometimes used to put him to bed at nights, little Slash. Who'd have guessed? Anyway, I got Ola involved as the wardrobe mistress of the film: she designed all the clothes for it, and she continued designing clothes for *Station To Station* as well."

It's the *Station To Station* ensemble that we recall as Bowie's Thin White Duke look – perhaps the most dashing of them all. "It was extraordinary," he says, "and I must give Ola full credit for the all-black, very conservative look: 'Nobody's done that on-stage before, that would be so cool. Why don't you just take Newton on-stage?' Then I had an idea of the French matinée idol, with the waistcoat and all that."

And always the little packet of Gitanes popping out.

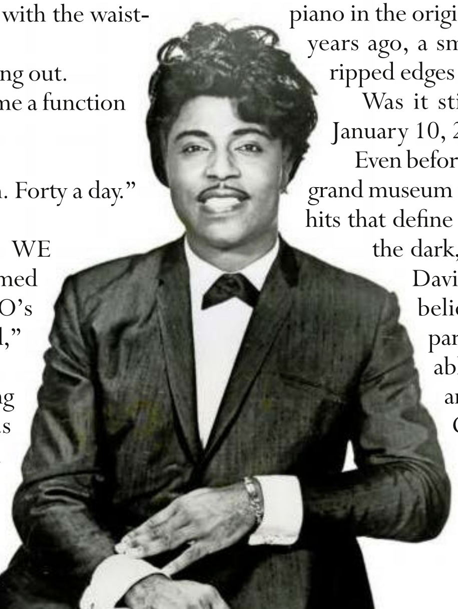
"Exactly. The function of the cigarettes became a function of the stage. And I got addicted to 'em!"

They are very serious cigarettes.

"Oh yes, but with me, of course, no problem. Forty a day."

THAT WAS ALL BACK IN 2002. AS WE wrapped up, I thanked Bowie and confirmed that his brief, unhappy tenure as MOJO's editor was at an end. "I'm happy to have helped," he said, laughing with relief.

"My first little… outburst… at the beginning was not directed at you personally. It was disappointing because my schedule is beyond belief. And I couldn't see how I could write any more at the last minute. How do you guys get your magazine out?"



It so happened that, a few months earlier, I had commissioned Bowie to write another article – which he submitted, neatly typed, bang on schedule – about rock photography. In it, he recalled his own early days of fandom, when he was the 1950s suburban child who sent off two-and-sixpence for two pictures of Little Richard. The envelope had arrived, "bent and smudgy". There was only one photo, "dog-eared and torn and, adding insult to injury, sized at six-by-eight instead of the expected whopper." But his belief in the rock'n'roll magic that would make him a star (and helps to get this magazine out) was undamaged.

"As for my Little Richard print," he added, "it sits now on my piano in the original Woolworths frame I bought for it over 40 years ago, a small piece of yellowed Sellotape holding its ripped edges together."

Was it still in place on that icy New York night of January 10, 2016? One hopes so.

Even before his passing, Bowie had been memorialised in grand museum exhibitions. He rarely made the instant smash hits that define today's brittle stardom, but he is woven into the dark, soft fabric of our consciousness. The young David Jones believed in music and carried that belief to Olympian heights. Like his sometime partner John Lennon, David Bowie would probably understand the strange blend of sincerity and sanctimony that's attended his decease. So God bless David Bowie, who became part of the blessed yellowed Sellotape that holds all of our ripped edges together.

Getty Images (2), Alamy

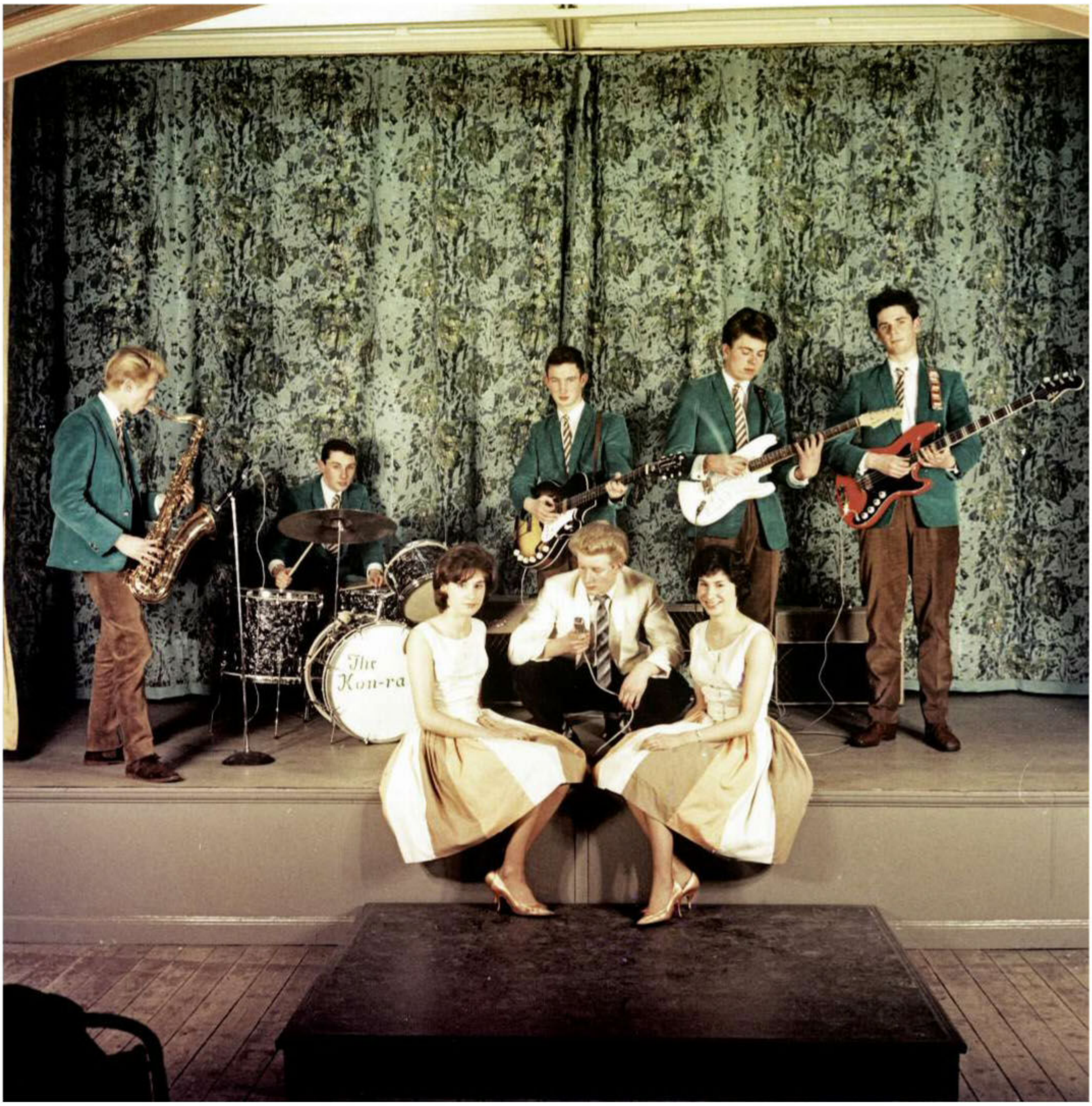
BOWIE WRITES #3

PIN-UPS

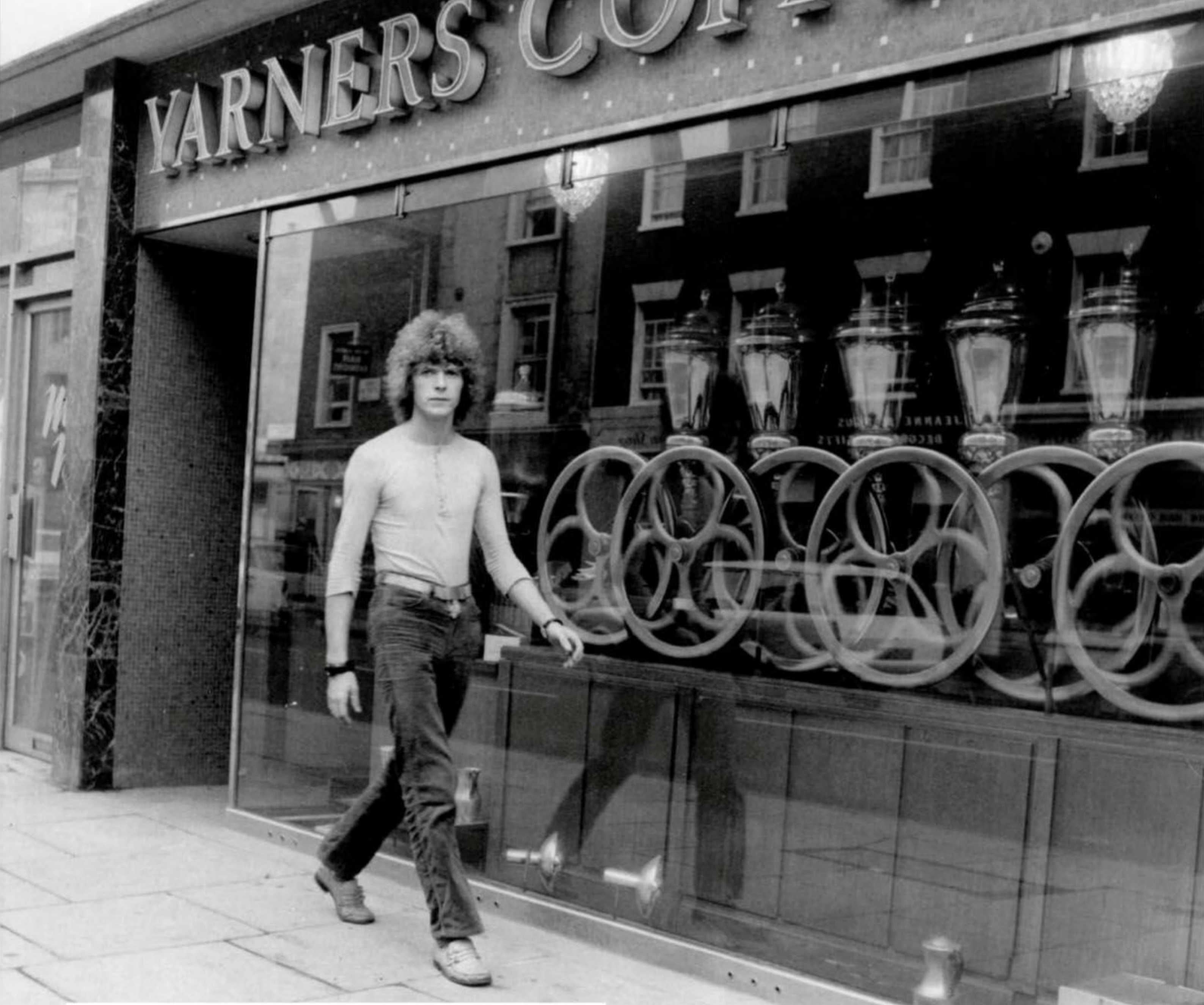
FROM EARLY BANDS AND ILL-ADVISED PERMS TO SLAP AND CLOWNS, **DAVID BOWIE** LOOKS BACK AT HIS LIFE IN PICTURES... AND IN HIS OWN WORDS.

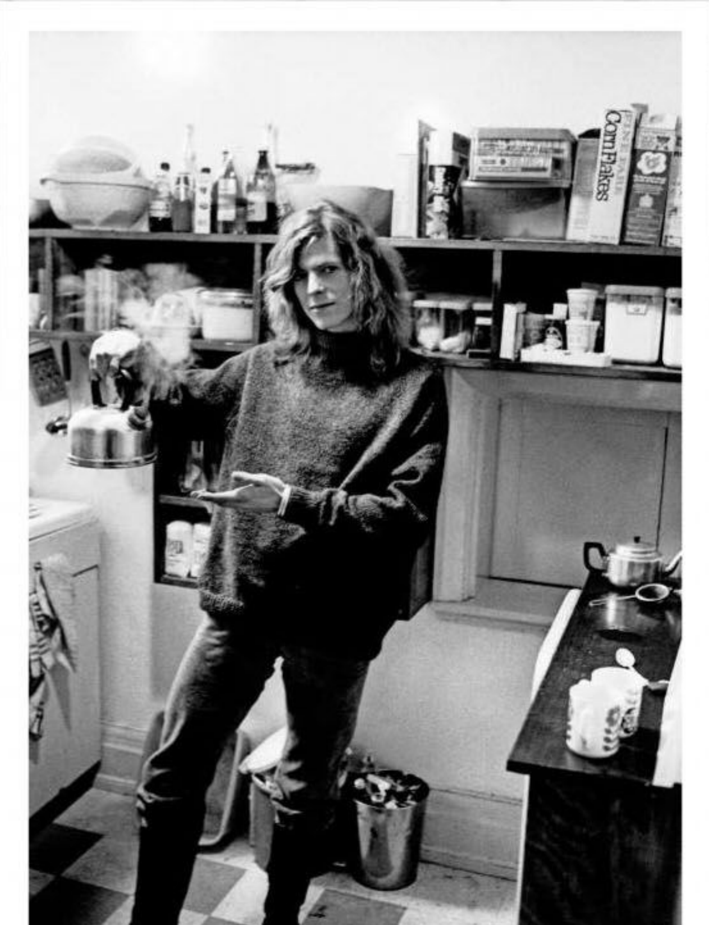
1963

"The Kon-Rads, circa 1963. The drummer, Dave Hadfield, apparently played with Cliff and The Shadows when they were called something else. Something Else, was, if I'm not mistaken, the name of the band. He married one of those girls sitting on the apron. The guy in the white jacket was our singer. His name was Roger. See Roger's hair. See David's hair. Who's got the bottle now? Those amps look killer, no? No."



LFI/Photoshot, Rex Features, Alamy



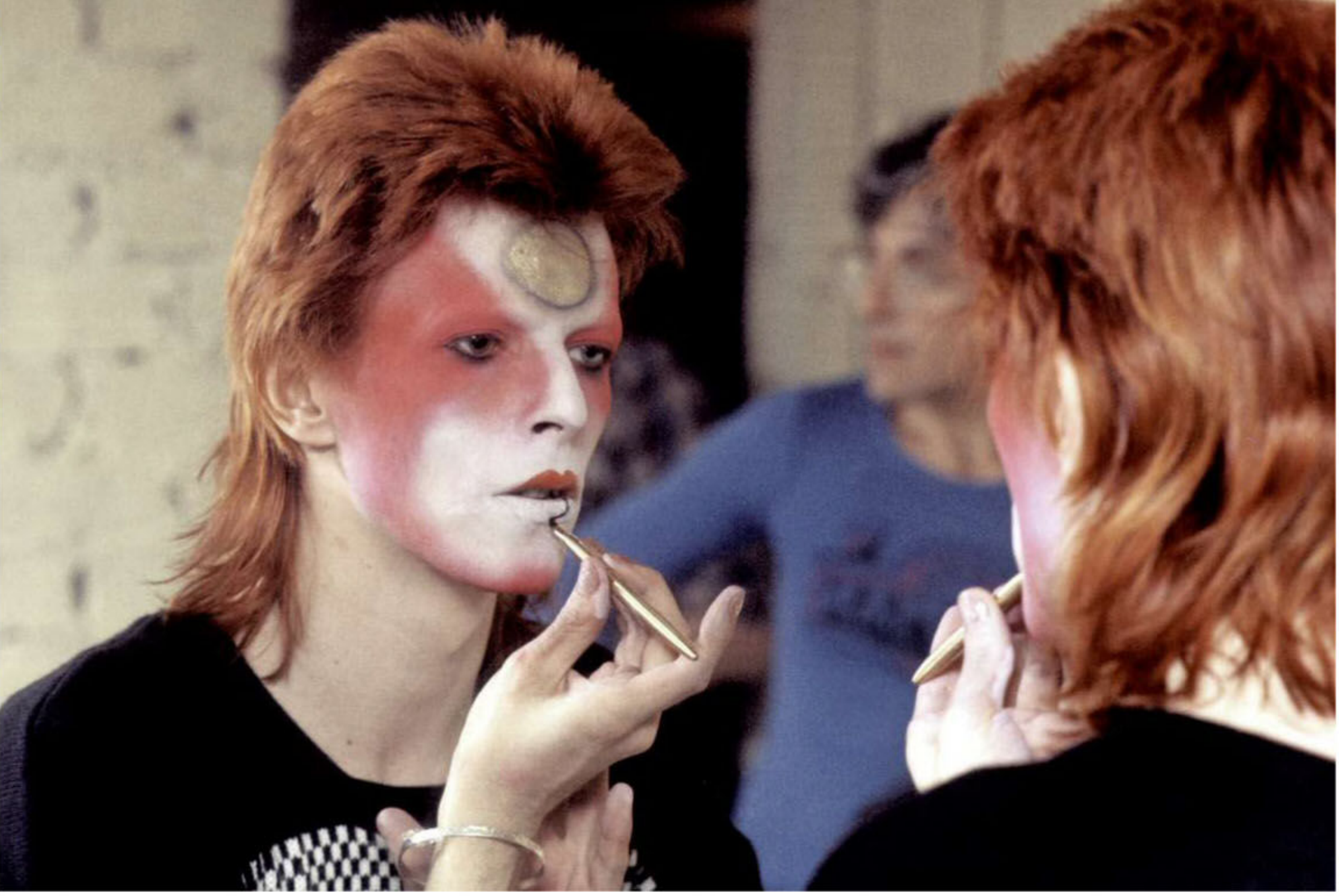


▲1969

"Me, passing a coffee shop. Very painful. Boom boom, it's the way I tell 'em. I'm wearing two watches by the looks of it. The second on Brazilian time. This could be Nairobi or Hong Kong possibly. More probably South Kensington. You don't see nice clean pavements like that any more. I've just split with Hermione, the great love of my life that year, so I've had my hair done. I'm not going to say anything about the perm. I won't. No. Let go of me, I'll bite and scratch, I swear I will."

◀1970

"Backstage at Glastonbury, 2000. On my rider I always insist on a full-size reproduction of my old kitchen from Beckenham, circa: 1969. Not many things from that period survived the years, though fortunately my trusty old kettle did, which I am displaying lovingly. The knee-boots help me relax before a show."



▲1973

"Here I am, putting on slap (one 'slaps it on'). The man in the background is Jamie Andrews who, along with Tony Defries, went on to manage all the money I made under MainMan. I left them to it around 1975. Thank goodness somebody looked after it. I'm sure I would have just spent it on slap. Or was that smack? No, David, it was coke. Smack's harder to apply and then you don't care if you've put it on or not."

▼1975

"Peter Sellers' birthday party in Hollywood, late '70s. Bill [Wyman] was already discontented with being a Stone and coaxed Ronnie [Wood] and me into forming the band 'Trading Faces'. The idea was to cover the big hits of the time with each of us impersonating a popular singer while the others played in the style of a band discordant to the chosen singer. This would lead to hybrids like Wayne Newton with The Troggs or my personal favourite, The Singing Postman with Tower Of Power. We disbanded after sobering up the next morning."

Rex Features, Terry O'Neill/Getty Images (2), LFI/Photoshot (2)

➤1995

“It became apparent a couple of years ago that if I was to spend more time at home with Lexy, our baby, I would need to resolve my touring quandary. This first attempt at a clone had me excited. The missus and me made it up out of old personas I found in my closet. Iman knitted in some casual wear. The project went non-grata and cock-eyed (a near perfect description of the little fucker), as the damn thing wouldn’t stop singing Nick Drake songs. I don’t know any Drake songs and never even got the wrap off that special edition 95 albums’ worth that came out a few years ago, so how Sonny Boy learnt them I’ll never know.”

▲1999

“This dream was the basis for a magic-realist painting I started a couple of years ago, the subject of which portrayed a horde of clowns chasing me through the streets of New York intent on doing me in for trying to popularise aspects of ‘mime’. ‘Walking against the wind’ apparently got them really hostile. It certainly isn’t a still from an unreleased video of The Pretty Things Are Going To Hell. Completely not!”

A WORK OF ART

JON SAVAGE CHOOSES 20 DAVID BOWIE TRACKS THAT CAPTURE THE MANY MOODS, FACETS AND STYLISTIC SHIFTS OF A REMARKABLE MUSICAL INNOVATOR.

DERAM
THE DECCA RECORD CO. LTD.
K/T
℗ 1966
Sparta Music
MADE IN ENGLAND
45 RPM
DM.107
THE LONDON BOY'S
(Bowie)
DAVID BOWIE

THE LONDON BOYS

(single B-side, 1966)

The first time he really found his voice. For the previous two years he'd tried the popular styles of the day: Brit R&B (Liza Jane) or Who-style rave-ups (You've Got The Habit Of Leaving). This is a terrific morality tale about the limits of Mod London's pill-popping lifestyle and the end of Swinging London. It has a melancholy, and that sense of him not being part of the crowd, the outsider and the alien; a major theme of his work. It was written early in '66, while he was under contract to Pye, but A&R man Tony Hatch thought "he wrote too much about London dustbins". So it was the B-side of his first Deram single, Rubber Band. Should have been the A.

Find it: *The Deram Anthology 1966–1968* (DERAM)

LONDON, BYE, TA-TA

(unreleased, 1970)

That classic Bowie mixture of upbeat music and alienated lyrics. It's got classic 1965 folk rock chord changes and it's not trying to make a big statement. Bowie's knock-offs were often better than the "grand statements", which could veer on the side of pomposity. Love this lyric: "she loves to love all beauty/ And she says the norm is funny/But she whimpers in the morning/ When she finds she has no money."

Find it: *David Bowie/Space Oddity Anniversary Edition* (DERAM/UMC)

THE MAN WHO SOLD THE WORLD

(album track, 1970)

I was playing Bowie records last night (the day the death was announced) and I wasn't really enjoying them because it was too soon. Then I put this on and it just sounded completely fantastic. It's well produced psychedelic pop, not sludgy rock like Width Of A Circle, just very simple and very straightforward but, of course, deep. Then you can segue into Kurt Cobain's version.

Find it: *The Man Who Sold The World* (MERCURY)

QUEEN BITCH

(album track, 1971)

'SOME V.U., WHITE LIGHT RETURNED WITH THANKS'. It was the aural counterpart to David Bowie's "Hello, I'm gay!" Mick Watts interview in Melody Maker. And it wasn't just in the lyrics. It was there as soon as you heard Mick Ronson's guitar slicing through absolutely everything. That was the big gay statement for me. Its revolutionary nature comes through the guitar.

Find it: *Hunky Dory* (RCA)

HANG ON TO YOURSELF

(album track, 1972)

It's earthy, sexy and vulgar and has a kind of burlesque grind. Burlesque is an important and unacknowledged influence on rock music. It has to be rude and basic. I loved that line "and then we move like tigers on Vaseline". It also has that bass riff the Ramones took up for I Don't Wanna Go Down To The Basement, that every punk band in the world ripped off, particularly the Sex Pistols on Belsen Was A Gas, which was written by Sid, the ultimate victim of Bowie damage.

Find it: *The Rise And Fall Of Ziggy Stardust And The Spiders From Mars* (RCA)

PANIC IN DETROIT

(album track, 1973)

It was still difficult to find 'louder, faster, harder' records like this in the early '70s. It's Bo Diddley meets the MC5 and it's a rocker. That's the thing. David Bowie did rock. *Aladdin Sane* was very much the statement of a new post-'60s generation. He took the Stones' Let's Spend The Night Together and turned it to his own advantage. That line in Drive In Saturday, "And to get it on like once before/When people stared in Jagger's eyes and scored." He wasn't much younger than Jagger but it definitely felt like he was part of something new and different while the Stones were stale meat in 1973.

Find it: *Aladdin Sane* (RCA)

BOWIE
PINUPS

SEE EMILY PLAY

(album track, 1973)

Bowie talked about seeing Syd Barrett at the Marquee in 1966 and being taken with his androgyny, how strange he seemed in that blokey setting. A very interesting thing to say as people don't usually tend to think of Syd as androgynous, but of course he was. Along with Lenny Kaye's *Nuggets*, *Pin-Ups* was part of seeing the '60s as history, even though it was just a few years after the decade had ended. It's a really underrated Bowie album. Bowie inhabited weird and this track, in particular, is so whacked out.

Find it: *Pin-Ups* (RCA)

REBEL REBEL (US VERSION)

(single A-side, 1974)

May 1974: his last glam single. It's got gender confusion and kids annoying their parents and it's just great fun. He released a great run of singles around this time but this one stands alone. I've chosen the American version because it's lighter and tighter, stripped down from the English version, with these weird phased vocals that sound like he's inhaling helium.

Find it: *Sound + Vision* (EMI)

WIN

(album track, 1975)

Young Americans is the great dividing album. I never got *Diamond Dogs*. It's one of his stodgy statement records. This feels almost throwaway in comparison but it's a masterpiece of slow tension. At three minutes in there's a piercing high note and he goes straight into the third chorus. You want that moment to come back again but it never does. It's just exquisite.

Find it: *Young Americans* (RCA)

STATION TO STATION

(album track, 1976)

The lyrics are drug-crazed occult fiddle-faddle and perhaps not his happiest hour, but it's a great travel track and a major shift from America into Europe. It's a journey song: we're on the Trans Europe Express – with steam puffs as the opening rhythm – and the train starts, hits its cruising speed and then we're off. It's indelibly associated with The Man Who Fell To Earth, which was a major pre-punk statement: alienation, science-fiction, art. As soon as punk was seen as a sociological rather than an artistic movement it was all over.

Find it: *Station To Station* (RCA)

WEEPING WALL

(album track, 1977)

I think *Low* is a perfect record. The lyrics were very jumpy and autistic, just images flashing without much logic, but side two was a complete revelation. A big turning point. It was the secret sound on 1977, the soundtrack to taking amphetamines and feeling alienated. This track is very light and spacey, with shimmering marimbas: it's tied into the exploration of space and synthetic textures that later fed into electronic disco.

Find it: *Low* (RCA)

Photoshot

MOSS GARDEN

(album track, 1977)

The second side of *"Heroes"* develops the ideas on *Low*. This is just extraordinary: ambient music before the genre. It's Bowie going beyond again. This really haunted my dreams in late 1977: that was around the time that I stopped listening to punk and began to think synthesizer music was the future. That's what Bowie did. Like The Beatles in the '60s, he signalled cultural shifts. He's the '70s Beatles, in that respect.

Find it: *"Heroes"* (RCA)

REPETITION

(album track, 1979)

This is a very claustrophobic, uptight, dislocated evocation of domestic violence. "And he looks straight through you when you ask him how the kids are." It's really fucking scary. One of the reasons I loved David Bowie was the shifting of identities. He is an actor. The problem with rock music is authenticity. The insistence on autobiography is incredibly restricting and irritating and boring. We never wanted pop music to be boring. So he projects himself into this scenario with chilling accuracy.

Find it: *Lodger* (RCA)

FASHION

(single A-side, 1980)

This is for the video as well as the song. Bowie was making fantastic videos with David Mallet: Boys Keep Swinging, Fashion, Ashes To Ashes. He's playing with gender identity and the limits of the look – he's extending his performative range: his expressions and grimaces during this clip are extraordinary. Love the rabbit pose in the first verse.

Find it: *Scary Monsters (And Super Creeps)* (RCA)

WITHOUT YOU

(album track, 1983)

How would we have regarded *Let's Dance* if it hadn't been so successful? It's maligned now because it was everywhere but it could have not worked. This is not quite as bombastic as the other tracks and it marks the end of Bowie's teenage "I'm weird" phase. It's heartfelt adult Bowie and just a really good, straightforward, adult love song.

Find it: *Let's Dance* (EMI)

THE MYSTERIES

(album track, 1993)

This is originally from *The Buddah Of Suburbia* but I first heard it on *All Saints*, a fantastic compilation and a masterwork in itself. Mysteries is like an extension of Moss Garden, 16 years on. Really simple, but also really emotional. The emotion in Bowie gets overlooked. This is Bowie referencing and reworking his own past: he began it on Ashes To Ashes but it really kicked into gear with *The Buddah Of Suburbia* (his SE London roots) and *All Saints* (the consistency of his instrumental dreamscapes from 1977-1999).

Find it: *All Saints* (VIRGIN/EMI)

HALLO SPACEBOY

(single, 1996)

I saw him do this with the Pet Shop Boys at the 1996 BRITS. I adored it, skittering drum'n'bass beats bolted on to a Bowie song. Drum'n'bass was a bolted-on aesthetic in the first place so it made perfect sense. I met Bowie around that time. He was charming and wanted to talk about Joe Meek. I remember playing him Peter Lazenby's Wave Speech: Bowie heard something in it and he and Reeves Gabrels just immediately started jamming on it. A lovely moment.

Find it: *I.Outside* (VIRGIN)

LITTLE WONDER

(Single, 1997)

Earthling is one of his best late records. It's a restatement of major Bowie themes. With loud, distorted guitar and manic breakbeats. Let's face it, that's pretty good. This begins with an onrush and then Bowie's late, crooning voice comes in: "Stinky weather, fat shaky hands/Dopey morning Doc, Grumpy gnomes."

Find it: *Earthling* (ARISTA)

SUNDAY

(album track, 2002)

The kick-off track from *Heathen*. It was written before 9/11 but fit right into that mood: "Everything has changed/For in truth, it's the beginning of an end." Another underrated record. He's crooning again, which always works against futuristic, electronic production. *Heathen* moved into something a bit more ordered, less fragmented and skittery. I like the tension between "take to the fire/now we must burn" and "in your fear, seek only peace/in your fear, seek only love".

Find it: *Heathen* (COLUMBIA)

LAZARUS

(single, 2016)

It's the goodbye, isn't it, with the themes of reincarnation and rebirth that many religions share. The video is so allusive and disturbing. It's still very raw, very new, but I like the fact he didn't overshare, that it was all transmuted into the art. It's a wonderful end. It's death as a work of art, which is entirely in keeping with the life, which was a work of art. It's all that we need.

Find it: *Blackstar* (COLUMBIA)

Finding his melancholy, outsider's voice, circa 1966's London Boys. Tony Hatch's dustbins not pictured...

"WE ALL THOUGHT HE HAD MORE TIME"

ON JANUARY 8, ★ PROMISED A NEW DAWN FOR **DAVID BOWIE**. THIRTY-SIX HOURS LATER IT HAD BECOME HIS MONUMENT. IN THE RAW AFTERMATH OF HIS FRIEND'S PASSING, EXCLUSIVELY FOR MOJO, LIFELONG LIEUTENANT **TONY VISCONTI** RECALLED A YEAR OF INSPIRATIONAL CREATIVITY.

I KNEW ABOUT DAVID'S CANCER FOR OVER A YEAR. IN January 2015, he called me for a little meeting in his office and it sounded ominous, like I was going to get the sack. He said, "We're just gonna have a little chinwag." So I met him in his office and I noticed that his eyebrows were missing. I thought, Uh oh.

David said, "I have something to show you," and he pulled his woolly hat off and he was completely bald. And he said, "I have cancer…" – and my life has not been the same since that moment.

I choked up in front of him, and he told me not to cry. And I said, "That's impossible…" I was wiping away the tears, but then we spoke very positively about the album we had planned because we were going to start recording it the following day. We were already keeping the album secret but this added an extra burden. It's been hard to live with.

Everyone in the band was wonderful about it, amazed that he wanted to work. But there seemed to be nothing wrong with his energy. He still had that sparkle in his eyes, and when he got in front of the microphone he was belting like he was on-stage at Wembley Arena. I was seeing that energy way into June this year, when we were still doing odd little bits and bobs for the album, and I thought he was going to pull through, and he did actually go into remission. Then in November it came back.

When I read the lyrics to Lazarus and a few other songs, I knew what he was doing. I think it was clear in his mind that this could be his last album. He was putting all those messages in there. Like that

Last steps: Bowie on the Lazarus video shoot, 2015; (opposite page, top) David with Tony Visconti in their band Hype, Chalk Farm Roundhouse, March 11, 1970.

first verse of Lazarus – "Look up here, I'm in heaven". I heard that and I smiled. "I know what you're saying David," and he laughed.

Knowing what we knew, we all felt so responsible for making ★ the best album possible. We left no stone unturned. We made it as perfect as we could. David was growing weak as the year went on, but when he was present he was ebullient, couldn't stop smiling, couldn't be happier.

THE BEATLES CHANGED THE GAME BY GIVING TEENagers an identity. It was cool to have your own music and dress the way you wanted. I think David did the same thing for outsider culture. He opened the world for people who hid in the shadows who thought they were different, too different to fit into society. Look at the way society is now. It's much more open and in a large way I think that's down to David's philosophy, his lyrics, his own lifestyle, his own example of how to be different and how to be courageous about being different.

And he was a unique musician. He was an extremely strong melody writer. He would also use odd changes of time signature. Like the three beats that run up to the chorus of All The Young Dudes – that's so him. I think it all came from his broad musical education. He wasn't just a rock'n'roller. He loved Little Richard but he also loved Gerry Mulligan. He had a way of balancing something old and something new. But his something new was always great. And lyrically he's just one of the great rock poets.

But he always worked at it, and he was always challenging himself. When we discussed using Donny McCaslin's band for ★ he said, "Tony, you have to *study* them. They're way above us!" So we both had to educate ourselves to get up to the level of Donny. Perhaps that's why David sang every single take that the band did live. Because he was learning it. Refining his vocal along with the music. David and Donny's band were hand in glove. They were The Spiders From Jazz.

Last time I spoke to him was about nine days ago. FaceTime on his Mac. He doesn't like phone calls. He likes to turn the camera on and look you in the eye. Quite disarming – you open your iPad and there's David Bowie staring at you. He was still upbeat. He said he was very weak but he was going for new therapy and he was writing new songs and was actually speaking about recording the next album. I think he thought – we all did – that he had more time.

> **"THAT FIRST VERSE OF LAZARUS – 'LOOK UP HERE, I'M IN HEAVEN.' I HEARD THAT AND I SMILED. 'I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING DAVID,' AND HE LAUGHED."**

Jimmy King (2), Rex Features, Tom Sheehan, Photoshot, Alamy

"WHAT AN AMAZING LEGACY"

STORIED COLLEAGUES AND SHAKEN SUPERFANS ON THEIR DEBTS TO **DAVID BOWIE.**

DONNY McCASLIN

Blackstar's horn of plenty

"With all the excitement of the record just being out and all these nice things happening around his music, then for him to pass, it's just so sad and shocking.

But I was so happy for him that ★ was so well received. His approach of being so present and focused in every moment and also so open and collaborative, I'll always remember that. And seeing the joy on his face when we were tracking the record and we would arrive at the right take, that was really meaningful to me. Part of the magic is the interaction amongst the band, and he was right in there, pushing us and inspiring us. There was a lot of humour and joking around, too, and he was right there in the middle of it, lots of laughs.

When the record came out, the amount of love from people in the jazz community for him was just amazing. I'm humbled to have been a part of it. My experience with him changed my life. His graciousness and his generosity in the studio, he couldn't have been cooler."

JOHNNY MARR

Mr Smith on Mr Jones

"He showed me that you could be who you wanted to be. You could be a poet or beautiful merely by acting and believing it. You could invent your life. He took lessons from Warhol and brought them to the high street through fashion, music, his interviews, his example. His sexual persona and manifesto was totally liberating too. In fact he's so culturally significant that his musicianship is often overlooked – like the guitar riff on Rebel Rebel, or his piano-playing for Iggy Pop, he was a real musician, a bona fide genius. I can't overstate his impact on me, growing up with those records."

MIKE GARSON

Bowie's avant-piano man

"I had a special relationship with David. It was *always* about the music and creative process. We talked about jazz and classical greats like Stan Kenton, Charlie Mingus, Cecil Taylor and composers like Stravinsky and Vaughan Williams. We had the same viewpoint on spontaneity, being true to our convictions and creating in the moment.

I performed with David in both his first and last American concerts. In 2006, we performed – just the two us – vocals and piano, at a private event that Iman and Alicia Keys hosted. There were cameras around to film the event but David turned them away. He wanted to be anonymous and was extremely humble about his charity work.

As a producer he brought out the best of all of us with amazing instincts and intuition. When he chose you to work for him you were in – fully *trusted*. He gave you his vision and got out of the way.

He was also an amazing human being. My dad passed away just before rehearsals began for a European tour. David came to me and was so infinitely consoling and compassionate. Many people didn't know that side of him.

He'll be remembered like Leonardo da Vinci – a true Renaissance man."

PAUL WELLER

Modstar salutes Martian

"I remember hearing Sound And Vision in Dingwalls when it first came out. I was stood with Joe Strummer and we were both like, 'Fucking hell, what is this?' Just the drum sound on that record, it defined drum sound for the next decade, and *Low* [its parent album], it's this amazing marriage of the avant-garde with a lyrical and melodic sense, from Be My Wife to A New Career In A New Town and Subterraneans. I'd never heard pop music done like that before.

But from his beginning right to the end, he was an incredibly inventive artist, he added so much to the language of music and its ideas and what pop music could be. The Beatles had the '60s but David Bowie had the '70s, those albums from 1969 to 1980, every single one of them broke new barriers.

I never met him but he did get in touch through his office; he sent congratulations when our twins were born [one is named Bowie]. You think he is always going to be there, he is such a part of the fabric of our life, and he added so much to it. What an amazing legacy, what a body of work. We'll never see his like again, a true pioneer."

EARL SLICK

Bowie's rock'n'roll riffmeister

"In early spring of 1974, by a twist of fate, I met a man who would change my life forever. His name was David Bowie. It was the first and last time in my life I ever had to audition for a gig. Replacing Mick Ronson scared the hell out of me, but I was put at ease by DB: 'Just do what you do and don't worry about it.'

So on and off for 40 years, that was how it went. Every record and tour we did, I was able to play my guitar and perform on-stage in a way that was natural to me. A good call on his part, as I can be a really stubborn bastard when it comes to taking direction.

I was fortunate to be there during many of the high points of his career, from *David Live* to *The Next Day*, the Diamond Dogs tour to A Reality Tour, and all in all it never felt like work. Goodbye to a good friend."

"He was a proper rock star. The rest of us were just chancers": Bono gives thanks for Bowie, New York City, 2007.

THE EDGE

U2's Hype man

"Before we were U2 we called ourselves The Hype in tribute to his pre-Spiders band. In the early days it was one of Steve Lillywhite's duties as a producer to steer us away from any overt Bowie references in our songwriting. It was so clear to Steve what songs had to go. We were oblivious, the influence was so deep – it was like his voice gave us access to our own. Much later, when we met and got to know him, I never got over the sense that he was a proper rock star while the rest of us were chancers and pretenders. Without his example I don't think U2 would have had the confidence to make *Achtung Baby*. He made creative audacity feel normal. That restless creative spirit will be his legacy, and the amazing music that it pushed him to make."

JIM KERR

Fulltime Simple Mind; sometime Bowie backing singer

"[Simple Minds guitarist] Charlie Burchill is a man of few words, but when he called me from Thailand he was emotional. I said to him, Bowie's only gone about eight hours but I already feel more inspired by him. He was an artist right to the end.

The way his career unfolded and everything that went with it: the look, the fashion, the video experiments, the acting… he did 14 albums in 14 years, and not one of them was remotely the same. When you look at it like that you could argue that he gave The Beatles a run for their money. But what made us love him was that he was completely fringe. He was mad as a Hatter.

Through him we learned about Lou Reed and Iggy. He was the consummate tastemaker – and the consummate magpie, but that's a great art in itself. You thought, Oh, Bowie's talking about Krautrock. Or, Bowie's talking about this book called Berlin Alexanderplatz.

In 1979, Simple Minds went to Rockfield Studios in the middle of the Welsh countryside to record our second album *Real To Real Cacophony*. It's probably our most Bowie-influenced record. We were in the smaller studio, just teenagers, and we were like, 'Who's in the big studio?' It turned out it was Iggy Pop, who was recording *Soldier*.

One night Iggy comes through our door – talk about worse for wear! Bowie's with him, holding a can of Heineken, and he goes, 'Skin up!' We hung out for a bit and then they disappeared. Twenty minutes later, we get a phone call from the engineer in Studio A: 'David would like you all to come round to help with a football-crowd chorus.'

So we pile round pretty drunk, girlfriends and all. Bowie's taking charge, and he's still got a Heineken and a fag, and we're all around the mike for this track called Play It Safe. I remember Bowie saying, very diplomatically, 'OK, sounds good. Now, can everyone who doesn't sing professionally step away from the mike.' That left me, aged 19, sandwiched between Bowie and Iggy Pop. Not one person there had a fucking camera."

KEVIN ARMSTRONG

Bowie's Live Aid batman

"I'd recorded some demos for the Absolute Beginners soundtrack with David at Abbey Road, but before we recorded the actual tracks I get a phone call from him saying, 'I've been asked to do this charity concert and would you like to help me put together a band for that?' Of course I said yeah. He also wanted to do a record with it, so I took my guitar down to Wardour St as asked and knocked on the door of a film company and sat down on a couch in the basement and in walked David with Mick Jagger.

So the three of us sat down and worked out Dancing In The Street. 'When we do the Absolute Beginners session, teach this to the band at the end. Don't tell them who's coming.' We recorded it in one take and that was the record. Then, of course, we did Live Aid. I woke up that morning, probably had a breakfast bong, turned on the TV and there was this huge concert on! I was watching it on TV but had to be at Battersea helipad at a certain time, so headed down there and the streets were empty – everyone was watching TV. I've got photos of David on the helicopter – he was terrified, a really nervous flyer.

That first time I met him at Abbey Road, he asked if I could score some coke. I made a call in a phone booth outside and a mate came down with some stuff and said, 'You won't believe who I scored this from – Angie Bowie!' I said, 'You won't believe who this is for…'

There was always a lot of laughter with David. Recording the *Tin Machine* album in Compass Point Studios, we'd have Soupy Sales [comedian father of drummer and bassist Hunt and Tony Sales] patched in through the monitors quite often to tell us filthy jokes down the phone. One day we decided to head into Nassau, found a band playing in a bar and asked to borrow their gear. That was Tin Machine's debut gig.

David was always incredibly gracious and generous. There are a few artists who when they die grow in stature, you realise how much they were dedicated to the art. Every musician who worked with him got more out of it than they put in – his creative vision would transcend your abilities. He could probably just give them a rubber band and a toothpick and make some kind of brilliant art out of it."

DAVID GAHAN

Depeche Mode man. Servant to the Master

"Where I came from, you were pretty much told, 'You're not going anywhere in life.' Seeing Ziggy on Top Of The Pops, I found that I could escape. Later, *Low*, *Station To Station* and *"Heroes"* really carried me through. I said to myself, I'd follow that voice anywhere, even when its takes me down. He enabled myself and Martin [Gore] and people like us to understand that we weren't alone.

Our daughters went to the same school [in New York] so sometimes I'd see him dropping his daughter off in the morning.

When he did a performance of *Low* at Roseland in 2002, I was lucky enough to be invited. He was just the nicest guy: he shook my hand and said 'I know you!'

I had been made aware, to be honest, that David wasn't doing so well. I saw him last year and now I wish I'd gone up to him, just to say thank you again for how much he'd given me.

★ is his strongest album in many years – like *Low*, it takes you somewhere. Fusing jazz ideas with modern technology is consistent with what he's always done. He always took the risk. I'm never gonna stop playing his records."

KEN SCOTT

Faithful co-producer, from *Hunky Dory* to *Pin-Ups*

"Has any artist ever gone out that way: two days after putting out a song primarily about your death? Brilliant, but that was him. He was fearless – no, let me change that, he *became* fearless. On *Hunky Dory*, the first time we worked together as co-producers, there were nerves. But once he could see his ideas were working and we could put things together the way he heard them in his head, he became fearless. And that just carried on and on. Most other artists, once they have success, become fearful of losing that success, but David didn't give a damn. He embraced fame but it didn't rule him and because he wasn't attempting to stay the same he could do whatever he wanted. The audience for his music was him.

He was the most amazing vocalist I've ever worked with. Ninety-five per cent of the vocals on the four albums I did with him were first takes. They were performances and he gave his all. By the end of Five Years he was bawling his eyes out – I'd never seen that in the studio before. It was all coming from him, his heart, his spirit, his soul… however you want to put it he put everything into those vocals. It was *real*."

Interviews by David Buckley, Danny Eccleston, Andy Fyfe, Ian Harrison, James McNair, Lois Wilson.

Getty Images (2), Dean Chalkley, Photoshot

SOUND & VISION

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David Bowie: A Reality Tour

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MOJO FILTER

YOUR GUIDE TO THE MONTH'S BEST MUSIC. EDITED BY JENNY BULLEY

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> "*Horses* straight through is more pride than ploy."
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RATINGS & FORMATS

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MOJO CLASSIC	EXCELLENT	GOOD	DISAPPOINTING	BEST AVOIDED	DEPLORABLE

LINDA GAIL LEWIS · HARD ROCKIN' WOMAN
SOPO 5003 FAY HIELD OLD ADAM
CINEWAX Kurt Stenzel Jodorowsky's Dune Original Motion Picture Soundtrack
richard young · inside the future
glass redux
Sarah Blasko Eternal Return
martyn joseph | sanctuary
SHOW of HANDS The Long Way Home HMCD39
WORKING FOR A NUCLEAR FREE CITY / WHAT DO PEOPLE DO ALL DAY?
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SMALL TOWN TALK
DAVID LITVINOFF AND THE ROCK'N'ROLL UNDERWORLD
KEIRON PIM
INDIA PSYCHEDELIC
SIDHARTH BHATIA

Urban regeneration

Completing their millennial 'comeback' trilogy, Astbury and Duffy's ferocious tenth album holds a mirror to our age. By **Pat Gilbert**. Illustration by **Darkhouse Quarter**.

The Cult

★★★★

Hidden City

COOKING VINYL. CD/DL/LP

KEY TRACKS

- Deeply Ordered Chaos
- GOAT
- Sound & Fury

When MOJO met The Cult's frontman Ian Astbury in London in autumn 1994, one wondered for the first time if the group's life-long commitment to heavy rock was about to crack. Oasis and Blur were everywhere, and the idea of an LA-based British metal band, partial to big riffs, flowing tresses and Harley-Davidson motorcycles, seemed ludicrously old hat. In violation of 1984's revolutionary "I will wear my hair long" mission statement, Astbury had that day cut his locks short and was sporting slim-fit strides and natty Patrick Cox loafers – albeit in groovy rawk'n'roll snakeskin.

Out of step with the music scene on both sides of the Atlantic, The Cult were earnestly promoting their gritty, self-titled 'Black Sheep' album, and would split the following year when, perhaps inevitably, it tanked. The next time MOJO met Astbury, 12 months later, he said he had just 10 grand left in the bank and was pondering his future. But did he or guitarist Billy Duffy subsequently go Britpop, or turn into Moby or Beck? Hell no. Astbury's next venture was the hard rockin' The Holy Barbarians, and when The Cult reconvened in 1999 it was business as usual with the thunderous *Beyond Good And Evil*. Their message was clear: we are a unique entity that transcends time and fashion.

Yet *Hidden City*, only the group's tenth studio album in 32 years, impresses a further truth. Marketed as the last in a trilogy beginning with 2007's *Born Into This*, and overseen by their glory-days producer Bob Rock, it underlines how heterogeneous the group's music has been within their self-imposed classic rock frame. Ever since the tribal/goth thunder of 1984's post-punk *Dreamtime*, there's been an impulse to make every Cult record different; and just as, say, 1989's *Sonic Temple* was the LA-airbrushed follow-up to the bare-boned riffola of 1987's *Electric*, so their last record, 2012's *Choice Of Weapon*, ditched the fuzzy bass-line grooves of the Youth-produced *Born Into This* for a more song-based, deep-rock aesthetic.

And it's the latter that the remarkable *Hidden City* takes to a dramatic new level of intensity and intrigue. Cognisant that their early '90s pomp of arena sell-outs and platinum discs are long behind them, Astbury and Duffy have seemingly elected to accept their personal nuances (Ian, the Native American-inspired mystic; Billy, the Manc guitar pragmatist) and venture deeper into The Cult's core values, musical and otherwise; and the corollary is some of the fiercest, nastiest, most powerful – and also starkly beautiful – music of their career.

BACK STORY: TEAMTIME

● *Hidden City*'s title is taken from a slogan revealed on Argentine footballer Carlos Tevez's undershirt ("Ciudad Oculta"), referencing his impoverished native neighbourhood of Ejército de Los Andes, alias 'Fuerte Apache', in Buenos Aires. Though based in the US for decades, football remains close to The Cult's heart, with Ian Astbury a "devotee" of Everton and Billy Duffy a life-long Manchester City fan.

Tim Cadiente

> "SOME OF THE FIERCEST, NASTIEST, MOST POWERFUL – AND ALSO STARKLY BEAUTIFUL – MUSIC OF THEIR CAREER."

Just why *Hidden City* should resonate quite so powerfully may in part be attributed to recent events in the outside world. As with *Choice Of Weapon*, but more so, the themes of *Hidden City* relate directly to religion and war, its vocabulary alive with words such as "blood", "pray", "heathen", "death", "immortalised", "destroy", "paradise", "killing", "holy". In an era when the civil war in Syria and the killings in Paris have created – or have been used to create – a creeping sense of unease and dread, the album's extraordinary howls of pain and anger, its dramatic apocalyptic visions and quiet interrogations of the meaning of life and death, align perfectly with the times.

Incredibly, the centrepiece of this album, Deeply Ordered Chaos, seems directly to address the Eagles Of Death Metal shootings, though it was recorded months before, following the Charlie Hebdo attack: "Defend Paris!... Syria, the fall…" Astbury cries. On that same track he intones in a deep baritone, "I'm European… tears fall on the altar… I'm European… patience is my daughter," the singer sounding uncannily like Ian Curtis, rather than the Jim Morrison he's long idolised.

The idea that *Hidden City* belongs more to doomy '80s post-punk Britain than to Hollywood's Sunset Strip is one of its many attractions, bolstered by songs like No Love Lost, a study in classic quiet/loud that starts with a stolen U2 riff, takes off into a rousing chorus and then sees Duffy mining Kashmiri Jimmy Page guitar scales on the stirring solo. In Blood poetically describes a man's dying moments, and his suckling on and then being seduced by a she-wolf (the fall and birth of Rome?); Hinterland is a heavy, bellicose outburst that would sit comfortably on *Ceremony* or *The Cult*.

But the raw power of these tracks pales into insignificance against the bison roar of GOAT (shorthand for "the Greatest Of All Time") – not just the meanest song on this album, but perhaps one of the dirtiest, angriest, crazed rock songs ever recorded. Built upon a tough, funky Bonham-style groove, courtesy of drummer John Tempesta, it pitches Duffy's squealing squalls of lead against Astbury's bellowed vocals, the singer's words opaquely evoking images of a bloody, hellish massacre. It's harrowing, stirring, and astonishing stuff.

Were it not for the laboured chug of opener Dark Energy's coda and tracks like the incongruous Dance The Night (Astbury does global conflict far better than he does love), *Hidden City* would be an instant five-star slam-dunk. It even has an elegiac closer, Sound & Fury, that references Shakespeare in its title and portentously unfolds the story of its female subject, perhaps a suicide bomber, whose "God… kills the innocent", atop a backdrop of splendidly un-Cult-like weeping strings and mournful piano.

Don't get me wrong, this is still The Cult we love and occasionally smile at, a group capable at the same moment of unleashing both passionate rock greatness and a primed-for-lampooning lyric like "Che Guevara in a garbage can" – a line equal in corny brilliance to the Dali-esque "plastic fantastic lobster telephone" on *Electric*. But recent world events demand some kind of visceral response, and sonically, musically and emotionally, *Hidden City*'s primal, from-the-heart worldview represents just that, unwittingly or not.

“And you feel like the clocks have stopped”: Elton John turns back the hands of time.

Love is like…

…his old joanna. Forty years on, the piano playing pop colossus justifies the hype. By Mat Snow.

Elton John

★★★★

Wonderful Crazy Night

VIRGIN EMI. CD/DL/LP

FORTY YEARS ago Elton John was a super-phenomenon, accounting for two per cent of all record sales worldwide. No one had been that big since The Beatles a decade previously. But was he as good? The ebony-and-ivory Hercules had also recruited a less welcome army of nay-sayers, irritated that such a performer – more sparkly showman than anything else, harrumph – could so effortlessly outsell such cool and righteous artists as Bowie, Joni, even Stevie at his absolute peak.

Time and the levelling down of the playing field have since reduced Elton to one among several pop institutions in the sunset of their careers still earning but no longer blockbusting. Yet being so overblown decades back now makes it hard for him to get a fair hearing beyond his loyalists.

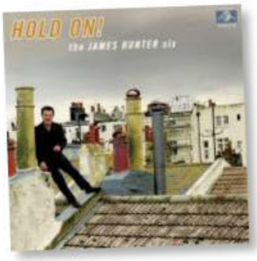
If any album were to change all that, it should be this, his thirty-third. Though Candle In The Wind will remain his most famous song, the (whisper it) mawkish aspect of the singer it represents is merely the tip of a far more exuberant iceberg. Though also produced by T Bone Burnett, in contrast to its solemn studio predecessor *The Diving Board*, *Wonderful Crazy Night* serves Elton sunny side up, where even in minor key mode his high spirits burst through.

Clearly he is in a happy place, and that finds joyous expression not just in the generally strong songs but in the old joanna. Like those other cheeky-chappie national treasures Rick Wakeman and Jools Holland, the reason Elton is in our faces in the first place is because he is an absolutely wonderful pianist. And here he really plays – gloves off and swinging with a delicious New Orleans roll, exemplified in Looking Up’s hyper-catchy staircase of notes. Only Nigel Olsson’s brisk but foursquare drumming hobbles the downright funky album itching to get out.

ELTON JOHN
WONDERFUL CRAZY NIGHT

Other highlights include the title track, finding lyricist Bernie Taupin in scintillating form (“Ice cubes on the back of your neck/When we’re goin’ through the parking lot/Radio hummin’ in every car/And you feel like the clocks have stopped”), and bonus track No Monsters, echoing both Lennon and Bowie as they were when he outsold these maverick pals.

If its material is Elton’s best since 2001’s *Songs From The West Coast*, the new album is a far better listen, thanks to Burnett’s happy medium between ye olde analogue and today’s pop sound. And to these ears Elton’s latter-day upright baritone improves on the classic model. Indeed, if you don’t have a great nostalgic investment in *Tumbleweed Connection*, *Honky Château*, *Yellow Brick Road*, *Captain Fantastic*… et al, you might well assess *Wonderful Crazy Night* as by no means their inferior. If you love pop, you really have to hear it.



The James Hunter Six

★★★★

Hold On!

DAPTONE. CD/DL/LP

The UK’s greatest soul singer signs to Daptone.

James Hunter first teamed with Daptone producer Gabe Roth on 2013’s *Minute By Minute*. The pair clicked immediately; the pay-off, a career-best album. Unsurprisingly, Hunter returns to Roth’s LA studio and has also signed to his Daptone label for its follow-up. Again, the result is terrific with Hunter, band and producer in perfect harmony. (Baby) Hold On and If That Don’t Tell You are quintessential Hunter, tough, soulful and capturing everyone in full swing. The real golden moments, though, are Free Your Mind and This Is Where We Came In – the first, a frantic boogaloo, driven by flashy guitar, organ and sax and climaxing with a mean barrio scream; the second, a bossa nova channelling Sam Cooke, that with its great soul-of-a-man vocal is both Copa and club soul.

Lois Wilson

Working For A Nuclear Free City

★★★

What Do People Do All Day?

MELODIC. CD/DL/LP

Manchester mavericks’ multifaceted and fantasy-fed take on the quotidian.

Just what *do* people do all day? Anything and everything. Fittingly, in addressing their question, the fourth album proper and first since 2010’s *Jojo Burger Tempest* from Manchester’s WFANFC has no one style, no favoured musical template. Musically, its crisp 45 minutes reflects the heterogeneousness of any given day. There’s a Tomorrow Never Knows take on Beck (Turned Too Tight), an inside-out Super Furry Animals (Blunderland), shoegazing-gone-grunge (Good As Gold), Primal Scream post-acid clatter (Bottle Rocket) and a blissed-out acoustic guitar-driven reverie (Stop Everything). This potentially bewildering smorgasbord is unified by Phil Kay’s sinuous approach to melody and low-key, conversational vocal. The subjects tackled are far-fetched: turning Venice Beach into Blackpool and stoned teens discovering a hidden portal in a park. The ambitious *What Do People Do All Day?* is no less than their *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

Kieron Tyler

Emitt Rhodes

★★★★

Rainbow Ends

OMNIVORE. CD/DL

Emitt Rhodes returns after 43 years, with a moving new sound.

Emitt Rhodes’s first album in over four decades finds him in a deeper voice, writing sadder songs that proceed at a more measured pace. Yet the skill that always made him singular – his ability to shape perfect pop melodies – still shines. The four cherished albums Rhodes released in the ’70s became powerpop touchstones. Because he recorded them alone, he earned the nickname “the one man Beatles”. This time, Rhodes invited acolytes like Jon Brion, Aimee Mann and Nels Cline to play along. The switch in his vocal pitch, as well as the new wariness in his lyrics, brings added gravitas. While he still writes tunes as sterling as a solo Paul McCartney, he delivers them in a voice that suggests a beautified Warren Zevon, in the process honouring his essential gift while showing a stirring sense of growth.

Jim Farber

Sarah Blasko

★★★★

Eternal Return

MVKA. CD/DL/LP

Australian singer dumps guitars and orchestras for synths.

Pegged as a singer-songwriter when she emerged a decade ago, Sarah Blasko’s albums have long since mocked the pigeonholers. Her guitar-centred 2005 debut *The Overture & The Underscore* gave rise to the singer-songwriter tag, but by album four – 2012’s *I Awake* – she was backed by the Bulgarian Symphony Orchestra, and now *Eternal Return* is all about analogue keyboards, the guitars all but sacked off. The most welcomed diversion sees Blasko wrapping her spectacular voice around unusually direct lyrics, unambiguously stating “I’d be lost without you” (I’d Be Lost) or “I want to be a part of everything you are and long to be… maybe this time I’ll be in luck” (Maybe This Time), where once she fudged and obscured. Somewhere between Florence Welch’s strident bellow and Björk’s performance art, Blasko possesses the pop thrills of both without all the ‘difficult’ bits some find off-putting.

Andy Fyfe

Sarah Blasko
Eternal Return

The story of us

On her first LP in five years, a former Delgado takes on the big issues, and wins. By Victoria Segal.

Emma Pollock

★★★★

In Search Of Harperfield

CHEMIKAL UNDERGROUND. CD/DL/LP

EMMA
POLLOCK

THERE'S a once-upon-a-time quality to *In Search Of Harperfield*, Emma Pollock's third solo album since Glasgow's independent stalwarts The Delgados dissolved in 2005. She's telling stories about family and childhood and getting older, stories to make sense of it all, as stories are supposed to do. The resulting record is beautifully crafted, as much about beginnings and middles as it is about the end.

Recorded at a sturdy base – the studio owned by Chemikal Underground, the label founded by The Delgados – and produced by her husband, Paul Savage, the follow-up to 2010's sparer *The Law Of Languages* can risk exploring what happens when life's solid ground is swept away. The title suggests a quest – an imagining of the house where her parents lived before her birth – and she transforms the common experiences of growing up into formalised rites of passage. Intermission, a song about the shifting dynamic between grown child and ailing parents, vividly explains this impulse. "When did you become defector/Leaving me the sole protector?" Pollock wonders. Stark, thorny strings enhance the isolation, turning this second coming of age into high drama, a floridly gothic twist for an everyday crisis.

Throughout, she intersperses harsh realities with dream-like mystery. On Alabaster, an eerily stilted Alice In Wonderland chess-game about the relationship between a "king and queen", fairy tale creatures prowl: "the wolves and the witches are in your bed/As the ghouls and the goblins crawl in my head." Clemency is a vengeful fantasy worthy of early P.J. Harvey, while the cosmic lilt of Dark Skies mentions Goldilocks: "I like to keep my fairy tales on shelves… why can't it just be as simple as it looks." In these meticulous songs, loose ends can be firmly tied. It's not all grown up, though. Parks And Recreation hints at earlier indie-rock days, a buzzy childhood vignette of a territorial feud. Amid the hurtling tempo and chanting vocal, there's bike wheels on gravel, the sense of pushing things too far. In The Company Of The Damned sounds like Vampire Weekend interpreting Margaret Atwood's teenage power-play Cat's Eye: "You thought you were invited/That you could ring the bell/That you had been accepted…"

If a well-made narrative isn't comfort enough, Dark Skies settles for another traditional option: looking up for a sign. Set in a park near her hometown, Pollock ponders the stars and the randomness of existence: "They gave us a stage/To write our own page of history." There's no happy ever after, of course, but at least this excellent record has come out of the darkness. Are you sitting comfortably? Then she'll begin.

Emma Pollock: she wants to tell you a story.

Jannica Honey

"A mythical domestic life"

Emma Pollock speaks to Victoria Segal.

Was Harperfield your childhood house?

"I never lived in Harperfield Lodge – it's the first house that my mum and dad bought and it almost feels like a mythical domestic life. It didn't have any heating or proper water, it was very bleak but my dad absolutely loved it. By the time I was born they'd moved. They probably owned about 30 houses during the time they were together. I lived in five houses in Castle Douglas alone. I think my mum got itchy feet very quickly and my dad was a self-employed cabinet maker and he would occasionally want to buy a slightly dishevelled property and bring it back to what it should be. It wasn't like those TV property shows: you might think that would make the family very wealthy, but it actually made the family very poor!"

Is the album about the search for a permanent family home?

"*In Search Of Harperfield* is this idea that you are suddenly appreciating an entire life. My mum died in February – she had been ill a very long time with heart disease and her worsening illness accompanied a lot of this album. The whole album is not centred round that but it made an anchor point, that it was written during the period of caring for and witnessing the decline of a parent. That was probably partly why the album took so long."

What is Intermission about?

"There was a period two years ago when my mum and dad were both ill at the same time. My dad still lives in Castle Douglas and my mum lived in Glasgow, where I live. So I was running up and down the M6 to get to both hospitals – I am an only child – and what struck me about it was that as a child you say to yourself, 'When this is over, I can't wait for things to get back to normal', because you always assume it does. We always hold on to that idea that illness is temporary, and of course, that can change as we get older. Our understanding of what it is to be here begins to morph a little bit."

Colour them pop: Animal Collective, cut the BS.

Straight to the art

Baltimore-born collective attempt to find a more direct route. By Andrew Perry.

Animal Collective

★★★

Painting With

DOMINO. CD/DL/LP

AFTER TELEPORTING futuristic psychedelic wonder into plain ol' US indie-rock on 2009's euphoric Merriweather Post Pavilion, Animal Collective had a jackpot moment, becoming 'net-age trail-blazers for a synthy alt-consciousness equally in thrall to Brian Wilson and Will.i.am.

Ever a four-way democracy with communication issues, their follow-up, 2012's Centipede Hz, fell victim to another pathology – a shared aversion to fan-pleasing stasis. Without the glowsticks-aloft nu-ravey bits it was not as immediate, yet also not quite different enough. In the interim, Josh Dibb (aka Deakin), absent for Merriweather… but a driving force last time, has again departed, the agonising "ego dance" of their joint creativity, of which co-vocalist Noah Lennox spoke in MOJO 226, has in theory eased by 25 per cent.

Perhaps chastened by Centipede's perceived misstep, advance noises on this eleventh AC album have been all about cutting to the chase: Dave Portner (aka Avey Tare) revealed a shared desire for "really short songs, no BS – get-in-get-out material". The result: 12 tracks and a 42-minute running time. The Collective goes pop?

Lead track FloriDada might suggest so. On a breakneck lyrical tour of beauty spots in the US ("Take a trip to blue bayou/Find Roy Orbison cryin'") and the world beyond ("dresses that glow on girls from Barcelona"), it's like a phantasmal reflection on the globe-trotting joys these childhood friends have experienced together, all wrapped up with a catchy chorus, and a sampled cackle from the intro of The Surfaris' Wipeout.

News of the album's recording at EastWest Studios, birthplace of Pet Sounds, in Portner's adopted LA hometown, will have piqued aficionados' expectation for a pop masterpiece. The first thing you notice about Painting With is, in fact, the layering of multitracked vocals and harmonies, which has characterised Lennox's solo records as Panda Bear. Portner and Lennox apparently sang atop plinths, rather than vocal booths, to give their voices a naturally airy quality.

In a further nod to ground-breakers past, viola drones from AC supporter John Cale underscore Hocus Pocus, but anyone coming at Painting With from a vintage-psych perspective is soon plunged into challenging waters as the stuttering but infectious Vertical gives way to The Burglars' skittering arrhythmia, reminiscent of early Squarepusher in all his break-beat turbo-nuttery – technically marvellous, but not lovable.

For all their organic methods, these Animals often come across as robotic and constricted – witness Natural Selection's echoes of woozy Chicago house classic Washing Machine – stripping those painstaking vocal arrangements of their humanity. More open, proggy structures only really surface in On Delay's sublime, Underworld-ish meander. Perhaps a little more BS would not have gone amiss.

Gazebos

★★★

Die Alone

HARDLY ART. CD/DL/LP

Fast, furious debut from Seattle rock'n'roll veterans.

From the label of Chastity Belt and Shannon And The Clams, Gazebos' breezy, debauched debut is guitar-and-yelp pop – playful, tight and packed with B-52's punk energy. Lead single I Don't Wanna Be Here has a yell-and-response chorus and a sci-fi villain voiceover from singer Shannon Perry, as well as her drawling, raging vocals, plus echoes and synth swirls and excellent phasey guitar from (R Stevie Moore cohort) TV Coahran. Boys I Like is a manically joyful consideration of pointless relationships and failures of intimacy ("We are all going to die alone/And that's fine"), with a hidden minute or so of wig-out at the end to woosily close the album. There's a brill cover version too – Rizzo's There Are Worse Things I Could Do, from Grease, lovingly updated with just the right amount of brassy sass and crooning backing vocals.

Anna Wood

Tom Andrew

Jon Langford & Men Of Gwent

★★★★

The Legend Of LL

COUNTRY MILE. CD/DL

Visionary pub-rock polemics from Mekon-helmed South Wales supergroup.

The Legend Of LL's opening track Adrian Street vaults into the ring with aptly flamboyant aplomb. This rousing glitter and spandex stomp in honour of the mink-clad mincer of Brynmawr – the man who put the glam into the grapple game – sets the tone for an album whose bibulous camaraderie is surpassed only by the intensity of its engagement with the gloomy realities of de-industrialisation. From the wistful social realism of Old Wet Argus through the woozy closing time visions of Llamas In Llanyrafon, the overall mood strongly recalls the Mekons' 1985 classic *Fear And Whiskey*. Never more so than on Pill Sailor's elegiac sea shanty: "They've shut down the docks/Thrown our lives on the rocks/But my good eye is wandering still."

Ben Thompson

Barry Adamson

★★★★

Know Where To Run

CENTRAL CONTROL INTERNATIONAL. CD/DL/LP

Album nine offers a inviting portal to the Barryverse.

Were he not such a fetishist of music's off-mainstream byways of B-movie chic, rehabilitated cheese and po-mo playfulness, Barry Adamson's self-evident talent would long have denied Mark Ronson pre-eminence as paladin of retro-modern pop. But since the former Magazine and Bad Seed bassman does very nicely on the fringes of the soundtrack world, he can persevere in pleasing himself in an extraordinary body of work as the cultist's cultist. A self-taught multi-instrumentalist gifted with a far stronger and more stylish voice than many star singers, this stripped pine rather than crushed velvet Scott Walker invests witty songs of noir romance-cum-sleaze like Claw And Wing and Come Away with that weird sense of hearing an alternative universe's biggest cabaret hits of 1969. Inventive, swinging, dud-free and very musical: terrific entertainment by any standards.

Mat Snow

Emmy The Great

★★★

Second Love

BELLA UNION. CD/DL/LP

Emma-Lee Moss's third lovestruck album. Linernotes by Jon Ronson.

Emmy The Great knows her way around a graceful melody, all unaffected sweetness and light, but also some decorative detail: Dance w. Me's dancing saxophone, Hyperlink's nagging guitar and vocal sample, the Afro-poppy Constantly. But Emmy's most effective tool is a sense of place, and her journey from experience to the finished work, saturated in detail, is often a lot darker than her measured delivery suggests. Love and loss already moulded 2009 debut *First Love* and 2011's *Virtue* (the aftermath of her ex-fiancé choosing God instead), but *Second Love*'s themes of belonging and separation – of love found, and lost – also document periods living in New York and LA, with all the hopes, fears, upheaval and renewal of nomadic life, explored acutely in Social Halo. It's unsure whether Hyperlink's suggestion that, "love is the answer in the end", is hard-won conclusion or desperate hope.

Martin Aston

Cavern Of Anti-Matter

★★★★

Void Beats / Invocation Trex

DUOPHONIC. CD/DL/LP

Avant-garde electronica by Stereolab founder Tim Gane.

When Stereolab slowly ground to a halt, their chief sonic architect Tim Gane was exploring ever-untried ways to subvert their signature sound. Yet his increasingly random methods invariably came undone once Laetitia Sadier's plaintive ultra-cool vocals entered the mix. Gane's new venture with regular drummer Joe Dilworth and synth wizard Holger Zapf finds the self-dubbed 'spectrum addicts' breaking away in style as they whirligig through Krautrock's more outré elements. Pulsing, hypnotic 13-minute opener Tardis Cymbals is a tough act to follow, with its primitive drum machines and rippling bassline, yet they trump it with voyages into scything death disco, bright Floydian vistas and even '60s vocal pop on Liquid Gate. Long distance runners should file next to the excavated outings of Kosmischer Läufer.

Andy Cowan

Steve Mason

★★★★

Meet The Humans

DOMINO. CD/DL/LP

Songs of warmth and hope from Beta Band survivor.

On his third solo album, Steve Mason veers dangerously close to that overfarmed damaged-earnest-sensitive-bloke territory, but luckily he doesn't seem capable of schmaltz or emotional cheap-shots. And he's a brilliant songwriter. Water Bored has a terrible title but it's an elegant, swooning pep talk with touches of hands-in-the-air piano and lovely vocals that turn it into a gruff lullaby. The extraordinary Planet Sizes is urgent and angry, with pounding piano and dark lyrics, then soars for a cosmic chorus. Tender sun-dappled folk runs throughout, laced with old-raver ingredients – closer Words In My Head has a synth echo and a fuzzy amen break straight from 1990. As ever, Mason gives himself nowhere to hide – lyrics, feelings and influences from the heart and the soul – but this time he's cheered right up.

Anna Wood

Benjamin Schoos

★★★

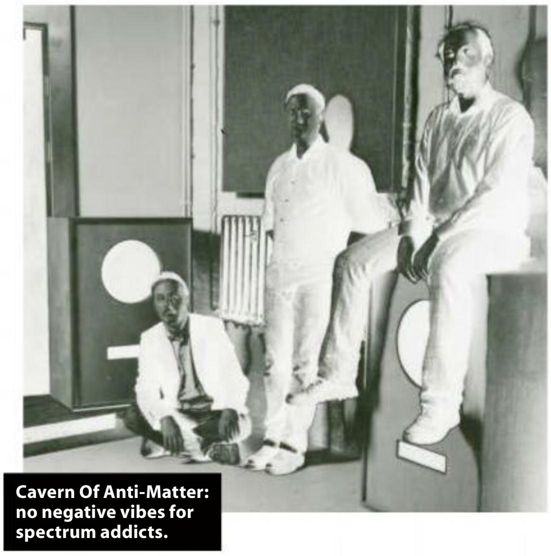
Night Music, Love Songs

FREAKSVILLE. CD/DL/LP

Belgian-born Schoos embraces hushed reflection. Just the right time.

Haunted reflection is necessarily not the appropriate response to current world events, but as Schoos' gruff French lyrics wash over you, even if you only understand one word in 10, there's something powerful and ultra-uplifting to his thoughts about what love is, though when he wrote this he'd have had no idea what would happen in Paris. It's Schoos' fourth solo album and, unlike the previous, string-laden, joyous pop outing Beau Futur, this is a pared-down shimmer of piano, synths and lonesome sax and trumpet, written during his insomniac twilight hours. Exquisite opener I Love You could be a Scott Walker haiku, lush but off-kilter as Gabriel Yared's Betty Blue soundtrack. That's how things continue: minimalist, other-worldly chanson. A couple of tracks are too similar, but small point really. Deep, dark, affecting.

Glyn Brown



Cavern Of Anti-Matter: no negative vibes for spectrum addicts.

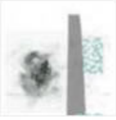
Choir Of Young Believers

★★★★

Grasque

GHOSTLY INTERNATIONAL. CD/DL/LP

You'll know them if you're a fan of The Bridge.



Justly or otherwise, COYB's reputation since 2011 rests on Hollow Talk, the lingering theme music of Scando detective drama The Bridge, which suggests that Jannis Makrigiannis and co are Denmark's Sigur Rós, cine-haunting and grandiose yet with a tangibly human touch. But 2012's Rhine Gold album leant more on burbling electronica, while Grasque pushes further still, into slow R&B jams, chillwave, even George Michael when Makrigiannis uses his higher register, as on Jeg Ser Dig and Serious Lover. Not that he's shed all progressive tendencies; five tracks of this gorgeous hour-long opus are six minutes-plus; Græske (aka Greek, denoting the Makrigiannis family line) and Does It Look As If I Care luxuriate over eight in a slow, smoky burn. TV execs: take note of three brief noir instrumentals, but if it's another Hollow Talk you're after, Perfect Estocada is the business.

Martin Aston

Junior Boys

★★★★

Big Black Coat

CITY SLANG. CD/DL/LP

Re-energised return from smart Canadian synth popsters.

In 2011, after four albums of crystalline R&B-inspired dance pop, Junior Boys Jeremy Greenspan and Matt Didemus found there was little left in their tank. Given the transitory nature of the electronic music world, the Ontarians' decision to take a lengthy sabbatical was courageous. But rather than navel-gazing, they've filled it with collaborations with pals (in Greenspan's case with Dan 'Caribou' Snaith), production stints and even a move to Berlin (Didemus). It's no wonder that their reunion album fizzes with energy – although it retains the underlying melancholia that defined their previous work. Jerky footwork rhythms (You Say It) and effervescent synth pop (a sparky take on Bobby Caldwell's sultry soul-jazz gem, What You Won't Do For Love) rub shoulders with dancefloor artillery (Big Black Coat), with Greenspan's voice – sometimes falsetto, at others Auto-Tuned, always seductive – as potent a weapon as ever.

Stephen Worthy

ELECTRONICA

BY STEPHEN WORTHY

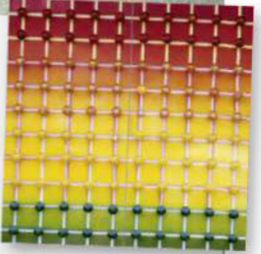
Nonkeen

★★★★

The Gamble

R&S. CD/DL/LP

Childhood mates' lo-fi, high-quality, electro-assortment.



THE STORY goes that in 1989, aged seven, Sebastian Singwald left communist Berlin and headed to Hamburg on a sports exchange. Intrigued by the unwieldy tape recorder that Singwald slung around his neck, two host students made contact, forming a friendship that's lasted ever since. One, Nils Frahm, is now a bona fide star, fêted for embracing the classical, electronic and jazz worlds. Yet with Singwald and Frederic Gmeiner as Nonkeen, these boyhood pals are equals. *The Gamble* was recorded on the hoof over 10 years, and the lo-fi nature of many of the recordings percolates through. A mix of ambient, Balearic, house, Krautrock, baroque, jazz and minimal might sound confusing, but the influences are handled with subtlety on the lissom, Schifrin-like The Beautiful Mess and shuffling Latin house of Chasing God Through Palmyra. An album in glorious hock to improvisation, rhythm and texture.

ALSO RELEASED

Prins Thomas

★★★★

Principe Del Norte

SMALLTOWN SUPERSOUND. CD/DL/LP

Nourished by The KLF, The Orb and The Black Dog's influential ambient excursions of the early 1990s, Norwegian dancefloor cosmologist Prins Thomas strips away (for the most part) much of his trademark beats on a quest to make some serious headphone music. A succession of sprawling mini-epics –throbbing with energy, insidious basslines and pulsing chords – prevail.

A Pleasure

★★★

Jream House

OTHER PEOPLE. CD/DL/LP

Inspired by mathematics and his favourite musicians, Mark Hurst has taken their names and converted them into drum patterns onto which he layers bowed cymbals, blowtorches and complex digital syncopation. Thus Hurst's tribute to Arthur Russell is haunted by snippets of the titular star's ghostly voice, with plenty of grand, hulking Basic Channel-like dub noise and muted, industrial beats.

Beacon

★★★★

Escapements

GHOSTLY INTERNATIONAL. CD/DL/LP

The Brooklyn duo's melancholic electronic pop is as shiny and cool as an Airstream trailer. Thomas Mullarney's voice – a sharper, more melodic version of Thom Yorke's world-weary timbre – plays a key role, but their emotional post-club grooves are the real star. On Cure, in particular, this manifests itself in four minutes of sweet-natured, footwork-inspired soft house.

Moomin

★★★

A Minor Thought

SMALLVILLE. CD/DL/LP

Starting life as a Hamburg record shop, Smallville has earned a global reputation for putting out stylish deep house that focuses on the organic, analogue end of the market. Sebastian Genz doesn't veer far from that loose template on his second album. The Berlin producer folds together gushing analogue synths, fluffy, jazzy chords and soft shuffle percussion. The results are suitably soothing. *SW*

Getting personal: Field Music's David (front) and Peter Brewis say that's a wrap.

Andy Martin

Field Music

★★★★

Commontime

MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES. CD/DL/LP

Prince's favourite Sunderland duo gets the funk while addressing the ageing process.

Field Music's David and Peter Brewis return with a spring in their step on what is quite possibly their strongest album yet. The characteristic clipped harmonies, prog undertone and hints of Genesis and Todd Rundgren are present, but they have never been this linear before. There is a funk snap too: opener The Noisy Days Are Over could be an early-'80s dancefloor filler; Same Name is rubbery in a Gang Of Four way. Most striking is the beautiful, string-suffused The Morning is Waiting, a poignant reflection on the moving on that's inevitable when ageing. The last traditional Field Music album – there have been solo outings, collaborations and the Music For Drifters soundtrack since – was 2012's *Plumb*. While that was a 35-minute state-of-the-nation address, the delightful, multi-mood *Commontime* is just shy of an hour, opens things out and is more personal. This might be the sound of maturing.

Kieron Tyler

Ulver

★★★

ATGCLVLSSCAP

HOUSE OF MYTHOLOGY. CD/LP

Norwegian avant-rockers' extra-terrestrial epic from hours of on-stage improv.

Ostensibly a 'live' album in that it uses material from 12 shows recorded in February last year, true to form, Ulver's oddly titled *ATGCLVLSSCAP* stands a few steps removed from any conventional 'in concert' document. Stepping out of their comfort zone to adopt a more spontaneous and improvised approach for these performances, the resulting recordings were then meticulously spliced and shaped by UK member Daniel O'Sullivan into the 12 tracks that form this sprawling full-length. Taking in resinous electronic soundscapes, meandering cosmic-prog and the pulsating grooves and cinematic synth-shimmer of classic Krautrock, the continuous forward momentum that informs this set makes for an immersive, head-stretching tour of the spheres. Almost entirely instrumental apart from the occasional detour into Floyd-like orbits, this is yet another bold statement from this ever-changing and challenging group.

Andrew Carden

GoGo Penguin

★★★

Man Made Object

BLUE NOTE. CD/DL/LP

Major label debut from rising UK jazz trio.

Together with Matthew Halsall and Nat Birchall, GoGo Penguin are proving that Manchester has become a fertile breeding ground for exciting cutting-edge British jazz. While Halsall and Birchall have adopted a modal-based spiritual approach, GoGo Penguin – ostensibly an acoustic trio – paradoxically take their inspiration from contemporary electronic music. After turning heads with their superlative Mercury Music Prize-nominated *v2.0* in 2013, they've signed to Blue Note and deliver a potent debut for the legendary jazz label that juxtaposes pastoral lyricism with urban angst. Chris Illingworth's elegant piano work – etching filmic narratives via sweeping, anthemic melodies – is central to the group's aesthetic but the injection of visceral power by bassist Nick Blacka and drummer Rob Turner is also a crucial component of the group's alluring sound.

Charles Waring

School Of Seven Bells

★★★★

SVIIB

FULL TIME HOBBY. CD/DL/LP

School's out. Completely.

When SVIIB guitarist and co-founding member Benjamin Curtis died from T-cell lymphoblastic lymphoma in 2013 aged 35, completion of the fourth and final album they'd written in summer 2012 fell to the duo's other half, Alejandra Deheza. It's an artful and lyrically dense synth-pop LP which she says is "a love letter from start to finish", the mood more celebratory than bleak as she traces the friendship/relationship/friendship arc of her fruitful years with Curtis. A Thousand Times More (indelible melodies, Peter Hook-like bass), and the intricate, swooning Music Takes Me help ensure that SVIIB exit on a part-posthumous career high, while the exquisite Confusion sees Deheza weigh her loss from within a creeping mist of washed-out synths: "We spent so long facing the days together/That I forgot how to be different from us."

James McNair

GospelbeacH

★★★

Pacific Surf Line

ALIVE. CD/DL/LP

Should-have-been supergroup's album debut.

It's a good bet that various members of GospelbeacH are surfers, dreamers, coastal-dwellers and fans of mellow '70s country rock, Grateful Dead, The Beatles, The Beach Boys and Mother Hips. They sound like the kind of musicians who can plug in and go – which being members of Beachwood Sparks and The Tyde plus Nelson Bragg (Brian Wilson) and Neal Casal (Ryan Adams; Chris Robinson) makes sense. There's an easy-going raggedness; they sound like they're having fun. Songs range from brisk and breezy (delightful California Steamer) through cowpunk (Mick Jones) and what could pass for a Lou Reed demo (Out Of My Mind), to bittersweet ballads (Your Freedom, with its early Eagles tempo and perfectly imperfect harmonies; Southern Girl, dreamy pop with jagged guitar). An album that makes you want to drive to the ocean and watch the sun go down.

Sylvie Simmons

Mystery Jets

★★★

Curve Of The Earth

CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL. CD/DL/LP

Londoners' fifth album, recorded over two years.

On the face of it, *Curve Of The Earth* is a slice of epic indie, but it contains subtle and imaginative sonic detail belying prog and psychedelic influences, with vocal harmonies, guitar loops, sequencers and treated drumbeats punctuating its lush sound, as on Telomere and Bombay Blue. Guitarist Will Rees has said that a feeling pervades the LP from Mystery Jets having been together for over a decade. Vocalist and lyricist Blaine Harrison will be particularly reminded of this as his dad, Henry, once played keyboards in the group. Lyrically, he revisits first love on Bubblegum, while on 1985 he was only a "spark in two young starcrossed lovers' eyes". A sense of growth, impermanence and yearning runs through these songs, culminating in the guitar-driven Taken By The Tide, with its bittersweet recounting of relationships dissolved by time.

Mike Barnes

Marlon Williams

★★★★

Marlon Williams

DEAD OCEANS. CD/DL/LP

Awards-swathed young New Zealander's rootsy debut.

His dad was an industrial punk musician but Marlon Williams' muse was moulded more by the Elvis, The Band and Gram Parsons CDs at home; so too choir activities in his Maori upbringing. Roots have been crucial to Williams; three years fronting the country-flecked The Unfaithful Ways, then three collaborative albums as Sad But True: The Secret History Of Country Music Songwriting. And now a solo debut with an encyclopaedic range, typified by its three covers: Billy Fury's 1965 melodrama I'm Lost Without You, Bob Carpenter's Silent Passage, and the trad folk-gothic When I Was A Young Girl, learnt from Barbara Dane, which he inhabits with shivery, Appalachian androgyny. His originals roam from hillbilly prairie twang to country Byrds swing, while on lonely-soulful Everyone's Got Something To Say, he is joined by a choir.

Martin Aston

Ono

★★★★

Yes, I'm A Witch Too

MANIMAL. CD/DL/LP

A second helping of Yoko remixes equals the 2007 original.

2007's *Yes, I'm A Witch* was a great idea that worked: a fashionable cast headed by Peaches, The Flaming Lips and Antony were invited to reimagine material from Ono's catalogue, its collaborative method entirely in keeping with her Fluxus-inspired 'living art' modus operandi. This repeat performance from marginally less familiar names might seem like a poor substitute for a new project. Happily, it's not. After opener Walking On Thin Ice, now an all-new beat-less lament given cinematic sparkle by New York DJ Danny Tenaglia, the fun really begins. Sparks perform an impressive costume change on Give Me Something, turning curt cold-wave into a 1974-style theatrical epic. Sean Lennon gives a *noir*ish edge to Dogtown. Best of all is Catman, where Swedish remix grapefruits Miike Snow remake Yoko as a cartoon-voiced, jump-cut cosplay queen from Tokyo's Electric City. Well, why wouldn't you?

Mark Paytress

Andrew Weatherall

★★★★

Convenanza

ROTTERS GOLF CLUB. CD/DL/LP

Wandering post-punk and alt-dancefloor grooves from a genuine maverick.

Three decades of pioneering, single-minded contributions to music have earned Weatherall the sobriquet 'The Guv'nor'. *Convenanza* is billed as a solo album, although much results from Weatherall's on-going collaboration with Nina Walsh, whom he records with as Woodleigh Research Facility. True to Guv'nor-ish form, there's a pleasing, ad hoc nature to these loose-limbed grooves. Antecedents are the funk-fuelled post-punk of ACR and 23 Skidoo; a contemporary equivalent is DJ Harvey's Balearic alt-disco. With echoes of Casbah-era Clash, The Confidence Man's lost bassline wanders hither and thither, Weatherall's voice, all ghostly and drenched in echo, searching for a dance-hall to haunt, while the twinkly, electro lullaby of Thirteenth Night is redolent of the Scream's Weatherall-produced Shine Like Stars. As he says at the start, "I appear to have got in with the wrong crowd." Thank God for that…

Stephen Worthy

"I appear to have got in with the wrong crowd": Andrew Weatherall ponders choices.

John Barrett

Guadalupe Plata

★★★★

Guadalupe Plata

EVERLASTING. CD/DL/LP

Explosive desert blues from Úbeda, southern Spain.

This primordially rockin' trio should by rights do for the dusty Andalusian interior what Tinariwen and Songhoy Blues have done for Mali. Úbeda – backdrop, apparently, for numerous spaghetti westerns – is rich in Romany, Sephardic and Moorish musical traditions, all of which are laced through Guadalupe Plata's potent Ur-blues gumbo. Their debut album's tense opening instrumental, Tormenta, ushers in a fabulously exciting, amp-burning sound, which, though recorded at Liam Watson's Toe Rag, fully evokes their parched native landscape. When 'el Jefe', guitar-slinging Pedro de Dios Barceló, flexes his yelp, you're inescapably reminded of *Surfer Rosa*-era Pixies (Calle 24 all but bursts into Tony's Theme), but thereafter they stretch out into supercharged Screaming Blue Messiahs jams, soothed only by Agua Turbia's spooky nod to their indigenous *duende* rituals. Culturally rich, and instantly identifiable as excellent, this one's an extra-hot essential.

Andrew Perry

Martyn Joseph

★★★

Sanctuary

PIPE. CD/DL

Messages of hope from an overlooked song-craftsman.

Martyn Joseph has been under the radar for so long, you can only assume the radar is a fool. His intelligent, enlightened songs are both energising and provocative, with strong melodies, confident delivery and solid arrangements that enhance Joseph's journey from subtle tenderness to growly indignation. Ben Wisch has produced an album of great warmth and humanity amid arresting stories that reflect thoughtfully on a variety of topics… Bobby Kennedy, Guatemala, liberation, salvation, faith and mothers included. All this, infectious sing-along choruses and, amid plentiful Biblical imagery, optimism and hope, notably on the poetic The Luxury Of Despair ("If the cockerel crowed what would I deny? I'd hope any tyranny that met my eye"). A Welsh national treasure… if only people knew it.

Colin Irwin

Wild Nothing

★★★

Life Of Pause

BELLA UNION. CD/DL/LP

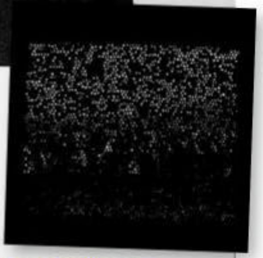
Third and best full album by a consumptive-sounding, Anglophile Virginian.

The influence of mid-'80s UK pop on mid-'10s US indie bears more fruit as Jack Tatum's thin, doleful pipes – think McCarthy's Malcolm Eden – stir vulnerability into Wild Nothing's strengthening mix of dreamy drift, glossy pop shimmy and occasional stab of ultra-white synth-R&B. The DIY cover of Kate Bush's Cloudbusting that first brought him to wider attention still defines the vintage of Tatum's soundworld – the heady Japanese Alice is like Wire's Outdoor Miner was on Creation in 1987; reverby, Cocteaus-like shimmers are never far away – while TV Queen suggests a charming pre-Grindr fixation on unreachable objects of desire. This is diaphanous pop music – perhaps overly flimsy on occasion – but full of sparkle and more variegated than before. One question remains: with a charismatic handle like Jack Tatum, why the so-bland band name?

Danny Eccleston

SOUNDTRACKS

BY ANDREW MALE



Jóhann Jóhannsson

★★★★

Sicario

VARESE SARABANDE. CD/DL/LP

End Of Summer

SONIC PIECES. CD/DL/LP

Two soundtracks, one for Hollywood, one for himself, from the minimalist Icelandic composer.

AFTER HIGH profile scores for Denis Villeneuve's Prisoners and the Stephen Hawking biopic The Theory Of Everything, another score with Villeneuve, for Mexican drug cartel thriller Sicario. Brooding, deliberate and tense, Sicario is Jóhannsson at his most industrial, both in terms of unsettling electro-acoustic heaviness and efficient machine-made product. On a smaller, more personal scale, End Of Summer is a plaintive blend of voices, synthesizer, cello and Antarctic field recordings, made with Chicago multi-instrumentalist Robert AA Lowe and Icelandic vocalist/cellist Hildur Guðnadóttir for Jóhannsson's black-and-white Super 8 of an Antarctic summer. As warm and enveloping as Sicario is cold, yet both reveal a composer at the height of his exquisite powers.

ALSO RELEASED

Masahiko Sato

★★★★

Belladonna Of Sadness

FINDERS KEEPERS. CD/DL/LP

Liberated from over-priced record fair limbo by the good knights at Finders Keepers, this is a dizzying no-rules love-in of deep organ drones, sugary J-pop, warped acid-Miles jazz, girl group freak-offs, fuzzed-up horn funk and Lalo Schifrin chase jams composed by Masahiko Sato and then-wife Chinatsu Nakayama. it was made for Eiichi Yamamoto's notorious 1973 psychedelic "pink" anime, concerning witchcraft, plague, and a phallus-shaped spirit-animal.

Kurt Stenzel

★★★★

Jodorowsky's Dune

CINEWAX CD/DL/LP

Composed for Frank Pavich's 2014 documentary about the Chilean director's ill-fated attempts to film Frank Herbert's 900-page sci-fi saga, this electronic score by former Queens punk musician and analogue synth nut Kurt Stenzel homages Tangerine Dream, Alain Goraguer, and Cluster, lending the doc a primal magnetic pulse entirely in keeping with Jodorowsky's doomed psychedelic vision.

Ennio Morricone

★★★★

The Hateful Eight

DECCA. CD/DL/LP

There are few pleasures to be found in Quentin Tarantino's three-hour snow-bound western, but one is its remarkable soundtrack. Combining a new theme with Il Maestro's original (unused) orchestral score for John Carpenter's own 1982 snow-bound (sci-fi) western, The Thing, the result is a thematically complex neo-romantic narrative of wit, tension and sweep.

Ryuichi Sakamoto And Alva Noto

★★★

The Revenant

MILAN MUSIC. CD/DL/LP

Following the outstanding and effective solo drum score for 2015's Birdman, Alejandro González Iñárrito enlists long-term collaborators Ryuichi Sakamoto and Alva Noto for the survivalist western, The Revenant. Usually adept at meshing sub-sonic sine waves with attenuated strings, here Sakamoto and Noto work with The National's Bryce Dessner on a rich formal score of chamber melancholy and electronic disquiet. *AM*

Basia Bulat: cut up about break-up.

Anthony Seck

Elsewhere, lazy flamenco and Moroccan flourishes. Bonkers. Lovely.

Glyn Brown

Basia Bulat

★★★

Good Advice

SECRET CITY. CD/DL/LP

Canadian singer joins Jim James in Kentucky to make break-up album.

There are no rules about what comprises a break-up album, bar, well, the artist having a break-up and penning a song or two to say they're a bit cut up. But Basia Bulat really means it – wall-to-wall, wail-to-wail break-up, all 10 tracks: "Oh calm hourglass… This love cannot last" (Someday Soon); "I'm running blind/ Into the arms of your goodbye" (Long Goodbye). Given her three previous albums of arty-folk and producer Jim James's quirky country approach with My Morning Jacket, she ventilates unexpectedly via twisted '50s pop. She bounces and bops through the anguish amid a rather monotonous big sound, dominated by organ pulses and sustains. Emotions unemoted can work, but *Good Advice* feels too disciplined/stylised. By contrast, penultimate track The Garden slows to shimmer and ruminate around James's heart-and-soul sax.

Phil Sutcliffe

Linda Gail Lewis

★★★★

Hard Rockin' Woman!

LANARK. CD/DL

Explosive follow up to 2015's *Gas Station Flowers*.

LINDA GAIL LEWIS
HARD ROCKIN' WOMAN

Recorded live over three days in Lanark Studios, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, with producer Quentin Jones and a crackin' band including Danny B. Harvey on guitar, *Hard Rockin' Woman* captures Linda Gail Lewis pumping the piano on a series of boogies in the style of her more famous brother Jerry Lee. While no one plays piano quite like The Killer, his younger sister gets very close, especially on the title track and a cover of Jerry's Rockin' My Life Away. A thumpin' reading of This Train provides another highlight, the familial push-pull of good and evil adding a feverish thrill and intensity. Lewis isn't bound by the rockabilly gospel, though, and on the Jones-penned Spell Bound, Lewis swaps her cowboy boots for a prom dress, delivering delicious love-sick pop that could have come straight out of the Brill Building.

Lois Wilson

Royce Wood Junior

★★★

The Ashen Tang

37 ADVENTURES. CD/DL/LP

Wonky retro-modern soul jams from the genre-bending London producer and songwriter.

Royce Wood Junior is unafraid to wear his influences on his sleeve. The London songwriter/producer, already refashioning British pop via backroom work with Jamie Woon, Kwabs, Jono McCleery, Rosie Lowe and Denai Moore, borrows more than a sonic trick or two from Prince, D'Angelo and Stevie Wonder on his debut, even stealing the last-named's patented synths, handclaps and drums wholesale. Fortunately, he has the songs to back it up, treacly electro soul jams such as Honeydripper and the throwback Clanky Love rubbing shoulders with quasi-profound piano ballads Ophelia and Love's A Lonely Town that lay bare a full-on Rufus Wainwright fascination. This magpie assemblage is smoothed over by a cunning mix, where shuffling percussion evokes the glitchy tricks of the modern Los Angeles beat scene.

Andy Cowan

DION
NEW YORK IS MY HOME

Dion

★★★★

New York Is My Home

THE ORCHARD. CD/DL

At 76, Rock and Roll Hall of Famer is as vital as ever.

Nearly six decades after his first hit, Dion DiMucci's real-deal voice having lost absolutely nothing, the King of the Bronx teams here with producer/multi-instrumentalist Jimmy Vivino on 10 new tracks, all but two of them co-written by Dion. The one that's getting most of the buzz is the title track, and rightfully so. A duet with Paul Simon, it's filled not so much with nostalgic pining as eternal love: for the place, the attitude and the sense of belonging the city offers. Burrowing down into specifics, the Chuck Berry-esque The Apollo King is Dion's homage to first hearing saxophonist Big Al Sears at the local temple of R&B, while Visionary Heart could've been a lost Doc Pomus composition. And it wouldn't be Dion without a nod to the blues: his take on Lightnin' Hopkins' Katie Mae is, all at once, somehow raw, slick, nasty and smooth.

Jeff Tamarkin

Josephine Foster

★★★★

No More Lamps In The Morning

FIRE. CD/DL/LP

Once more, wyrd folkster Foster delightedly defies convention.

Listening to Josephine Foster sing, in her slooow and deliberate way, you might take this to be the stranger sister of Mary Margaret O'Hara crossed with Tiny Tim; an eldritch but determined voice, not unlike Vashti Bunyan, or Grandma Walton drunk. But Colorado-based Foster is young and looks like a hip Virginia Woolf. As an adolescent she worked as a funeral and wedding singer; now she delivers twisted, nostalgic jazz, flanked by her Spanish husband's eerie Portuguese guitar, its dissonant notes bending and quavering, her own sepia croon trembling sometimes like a saw, sometimes a harmonium. That this outlandish delivery is so touching is a tribute to the phrasing's creaking, fragile charm. Two tracks here are poems set to music, one by James Joyce and, more affecting, Rudyard Kipling's transformed Blue Roses.

Sidestepper

★★★★

Supernatural Love

REAL WORLD. CD/DL/LP

The first best album of summer 2016.

sidestepper

Long-time resident in Colombia, Richard Blair has spent two decades exploring the links between traditional cumbia (he moved to South America after working with Totó La Momposina, queen of that genre) and the drum'n'bass and trip-hop he left behind. He has come up trumps on his band's fifth album, however, by stripping out the electronics that made Sidestepper such an innovative force in Bogotá and concentrating on the roots – percussion with a heavy, spiritual vibe – then adding dreamy guitars, spooky flutes and a bit of whistling. Unsurprisingly, there is a great Caribbean groove throughout, from the relentless, hip-shaking choral opener, Fuego Que Te Llama, through the more mellow moods, right to the kalimba and call-and-response vocals on Celestial. Lovers of their earlier electro-cumbia won't be disappointed, but nor will reggae fans or Garifuna aficionados.

David Hutcheon

Bonnie Raitt

★★★★

Dig In Deep

REDWING. CD/DL/LP

Old-fashioned girl, old-fashioned slide guitar… and the blues spirit moving her.

Set aside that immortal slide and, 45 years in, a good Bonnie Raitt album gets hot because of the sheer meat-and-two-veg muscle of her funking, boogieing, blues-loving soul, her dyed-in-the-bloodstream band playing as one – one muso-athlete, that is, every sinew in harmony. Then, down in the grooves, the difference is how she delivers intelligence and sensuality like she never saw a line between them. So the Raitt co-written Unintended Consequence Of Love is all tangled sheets ("was all we could do to get out of bed"), and she's a louche cannon around INXS's sweat-soaked Need You Tonight. But she writes/chooses other songs where it's the thinking that's hard, like her own Undone ("There's a sword at the tip of my tongue") or Joe Henry's You've Changed My Mind ("You've waited as still/ As the stone of my will").

Phil Sutcliffe

Promise & The Monster

★★★

Feed The Fire

BELLA UNION. CD/DL/LP

Spacey Swedish atmospherics give Lana Del Rey a run for her money.

The wraith-like *Feed The Fire* is the third album from Sweden's Billie Lindhal aka Promise & The Monster, but the first to be issued internationally. The fact that its predecessors were released by Imperial, the label most notable for having José González on its books, cannot be taken as a heads-up on where Lindhal is coming from. She is no folk-derived singer-songwriter. *Feed The Fire* takes Lana Del Rey to a spacey summit meeting with the Lee Hazlewood of Summer Wine after a conference call with Sweden's own Concretes. Rather than being a Zombies cover, Time Of The Season meshes spaghetti western guitar with a galloping swiftness paralleling the out-of-control moments before a splashdown in ice-cold water. Slow And Quiet and album closer Fine Horseman take the pace down, melding this tactic to a Knife-like jitteriness.

Kieron Tyler

Snowboy & The Latin Section

★★★

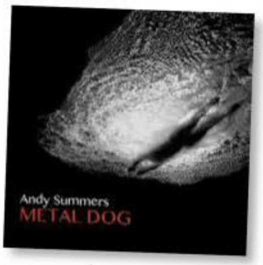
New York Afternoon

SNOWBOY. CD/DL/LP

No evidence of 16th album blues here from superior percussionist.

Hard to believe that it is 30 years since DJ, writer and broadcaster Mark Cotgrove made his first record under the nom de percussion Snowboy. Cotgrove's playing has always had a tremendously fluid, intuitive feel, which has led to him appearing at sessions by artists such as Lisa Stansfield, Mark Ronson, Amy Winehouse, Deodato and Airto Moreira. More importantly, he is the leader of one of Europe's leading Afro-Cuban jazz outfits and his sixteenth album, *New York Afternoon*, is a warm capture of his work. For all the fine instrumentals here (Hammond player Neil Angilley's Cala Escarpada is real highlight), the album sparkles when showcasing its vocalists: Richie Cole and Eddie Jefferson's title track is brought to life by Baltimore house/neo-soul singer Marc Evans, while Better and Oxen Free are delivered with élan by Boston-based vocalist Jen Kearney.

Daryl Easlea



Andy Summers

★★★

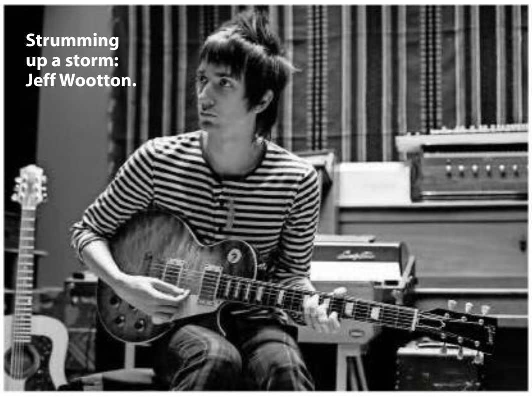
Metal Dog

ANDY SUMMERS MUSIC. CD

Ex-Police maestro's 13th solo… a creative life in which the switch never flips to 'off'.

Instrumentals written for a dance company, though no terpsichore actually transpired, Summers' Venice Beach home-recorded debut self-release is described by its author as "open" because it has no voices and lyrics to impose "meaning"… nor to demand attention one might add, given how readily classical buffs deploy Bach's or Mahler's finest as background music. Still, his spiky guitar approach offers little to encourage listener ease. The title track sets a hard-hitting heavy-industry tone, all metal-hammering guitar, hydraulic hiss and lurching machine rhythms, augmented by Harmonograph's clashing chords and the brutality of Vortex Street's Twinkle Twinkle Little Star cuteness-meets-Depeche Mode's factory floor. But nearly every track throws curves and swerves at you, new rhythms, new tones, new tunes, new textures, when choruses and middle eights might ordinarily be coming back around. Salt and vinegar? You got it.

Phil Sutcliffe



Strumming up a storm: Jeff Wootton.

Mavis Staples

★★★

Livin' On A High Note

ANTI. CD/DL/LP

M Ward produced fifth for Anti; songs by musician fans.

Mavis's last two albums, 2010's *You Are Not Alone* and 2013's *One True Vine*, are among her finest, producer Jeff Tweedy capturing her passionate vocal on social justice and gospel cries in the intimacy of his Chicago Loft studio. At the instigation of her label, though, it's all change for her fifth for Anti. M Ward takes on production, recording is spread between LA, Chicago and the Agoura Hills, CA with guests Valerie June and Trombone Shorty, and Mavis tries to stamp authority on songs written by Ward's musician pals. Benjamin Booker's Take Us Back places her in a rock'n'soul setting, her vocal tough, almost Tina Turner- like; Ben Harper's Love And Trust is pure country soul; M Ward's MLK Song is plaintive, heart stirring. They're not all great though – neither the Charity Rose or Nick Cave contributions hit the spot.

Lois Wilson

Jeff Wootton

★★★

The Way The Light

SYMPATHY FOR VINYL. DL/LP

He's got an effects rack and he's gonna use it.

Pictured on his debut solo album posing with his Fender Jaguar all a-shiver, Gorillaz guitarist Jeff Wootton helpfully reveals most of what we need to know: he kerrangs dead-centre in that lineage of guitar rock starting with surf dudes like Dick Dale through such six-stringed psych showstoppers as Jeff Beck's Bolero and Jimi Hendrix's Third Stone From The Sun, continuing via Robert Fripp's geekily rip-roaring cameos to Television/Tom Verlaine and the Eno-produced U2, then returning to its valve-blowing roots with such as Sonic Youth, Dinosaur Jr and My Bloody Valentine. Squarely within this bombastically atmospheric tradition Wootton strums up a storm. Seldom deviating from solid rock rhythm, the multi-instrumentalist Mancunian moans along sepulchrally from time to time (every track is titled as if a lost Joy Division song) but the guitar's the star.

Mat Snow

FOLK

BY COLIN IRWIN

Yorkston – Thorne – Khan
Everything Sacred

Yorkston/Thorne/Khan

★★★★

Everything Sacred

DOMINO. CD/DL/LP

James Yorkston, New Delhi sarangi player/singer Suhail Yusuf Khan and Lamb bassist Jon Thorne.

WE OFTEN bemoan the lack of daring among the young in modern folk song. The unlikely trio of Yorkston, Khan and Thorne fearlessly address that anomaly with mesmerising "Scottish-Irish-Indian-English music in the raw" which spits in the face of 'normal' genre classifications. The long opening piece Knockentanz gracefully introduces us to the unfamiliar but effective blend of sarangi, bass and guitar that, with occasionally rhythmic explosions, leads an idiosyncratic path to Khan's beautifully spiritual voice. With clear relish, Yorkston and Thorne guide him into ever more mysterious outposts of a musical hinterland that involves Ivor Cutler's delicious Little Black Buzzer and Lal Waterson's fragile classic Song For Thirza amid a broad-ranging meander through their influences and traditions. Enlightened and challenging…an Incredible String Band for a brave new world.

ALSO RELEASED

Fay Hield & The Hurricane Party

★★★★

Old Adam

SOUNDPOST. CD/DL

Fay Hield is one of folk music's most pre-eminent modern voices and this confident, traditional album underlines her current lofty status. It helps, of course, to have the outstanding Sam Sweeney, Rob Harbron, Roger Wilson, Ben Nicholls, Toby Kearney, Jon Boden and Martin Simpson backing her, but her gift for unearthing colourful material and then delivering it with both swagger and soul is compelling.

Show Of Hands

★★★

The Long Way Home

HANDS ON MUSIC. CD/DL

A slight deviation for SOH as they venture beyond the pen of Steve Knightley to incorporate material by Chris Hoban, Andrew Cadie, Dick Gaughan and Brian McNeil, with Phil Beer singing lead on a couple of tracks and guest slots from Jackie Oates, Phillip Henry, Hannah Martin and Ange Hardy. The Knightley factor is still crucial, though, and he's come up with another sing-along classic in Walk With Me.

Maz O'Connor

★★★

The Longing Kind

RESTLESS HEAD. CD/DL

It's a brave leap for Maz O'Connor from primarily tradition-rooted material to a wholly self-written album. "For this album I didn't want to hide behind historical disasters and mythological beasts at the expense of my own experience", she says. Brave move, and, while her singing improves and the inherent melancholia of Billy Waters and Emma is persuasive, it relies heavily on Jim Moray's production and lively arrangements.

Various

★★★★

Songs Of Separation

NAVIGATOR. CD/DL

Broken-hearted? If there are wrists to be cutting, this should do nicely. Its saving grace is a beauty and elegance built from pitching some of the finest singers of the day (Karine Polwart, Eliza Carthy, Hannah Read among them) with heart-wrenching songs such as Poor Man's Lamentation and Echo Marks The Corncrake on a remote Hebridean island and leaving them to get on with it. Collaboratively, spiritually and musically… it works superbly. *CI*

Linda Jackson

FILTER ALBUMS EXTRA

Bleeding Heart Pigeons

★★★★

Is

VIRGIN. **CD/DL/LP**

Daft name, but the Limerick trio serve-up an intriguing mix of indie pop and woozy soundscapes. With immediate gems and shrouded shades, their debut proves an enticing and often surprising affair. *PS*

Ryan Culwell

★★★

Flatlands

LIGHTNING ROD. **CD/DL**

This Texan's debut has been compared with Springsteen's *Nebraska*. His sparse acoustic songs are indeed evocative of a windswept panhandle whose scoured psycho-geography shapes his characters with dirt, blood, spiritual foreboding. *JB*

Jordan Klassen

★★★

Javelin

NEVADO MUSIC. **CD/DL**

Vancouver-based folk-popster Klassen shares John Grant's Canadian record label and also his flair for immaculate, multilayered song craft. Much Sufjan-like purity to like here, though a little more grit or humour would be nice. *JB*

KULA SHAKER
K20

Kula Shaker

★★

K 2.0

STRANGEFOLK. **CD/DL/LP**

Twenty years after their debut *K*, only the opening and closing tracks reflect Crispian Mills and co's Indian-tinged indie past as psych-lite gives way to chunkier rock'n'roll. Capable, often catchy, but the 'Shaker fail to truly stir. *PS*

LISSIE
my wild west

Lissie

★★★

My Wild West

COOKING VINYL. **CD/DL/LP**

Former folkie Lissie fizzes with blonde ambition. Vocally a mix of Stevie Nicks and Paula Frazer, Lissie targets the LA mainstream for all her "living on the edge". Of the 12 heat-seeking tunes, Daughters sounds the best bet. *MS*

MASS GOTHIC

Mass Gothic

★★★

Mass Gothic

SUB POP. **CD/DL/LP/MC**

More euphoric indie fits and starts from Hooray For Earth's Noel Heroux. Nice Night splices Wilco's Radio Cure with Animal Collective's twisted disco and a clamorous arrangement. Elsewhere edgy beats and encoded melodies peak and fade. *JB*

Nap Eyes

★★★★

Thought Rock Fish Scale

PARADISE OF BACHELORS. **CD/DL/LP**

It's almost a relief to hear the stoical guitars-bass-drums simplicity of this quartet from Pictou, Nova Scotia. Concise, understated alt rock with cryptic, literate lyrics for Go Betweens/Bill Callahan fans. *JB*

Porches

★★★

Pool

DOMINO. **CD/DL/LP**

New Yorker Aaron Maine puts a foot onto the dancefloor for his second Porches LP (and first for Domino). Experimental pop that feels for the warm electronic pulse of '80s futurism, as blueprinted by the likes of Peter Gabriel's *So*. *JB*

DAN SARTAIN
Century Plaza

Dan Sartain

★★★★

Century Plaza

ONE LITTLE INDIAN. **CD/DL/LP**

Rockabilly-schooled Sartain left the garage several LPs ago and here he mines the skulking electro-punk of Suicide and Depeche Mode's sleazy synth overtures, including a creepy crawl reworking of his own Walk Among The Cobras. *JB*

Leland Sundries
music for outcasts

Leland Sundries

★★★

Music For Outcasts

L'ECHIQUIER. **CD/DL/LP/MC**

Pleasing alias of (another) Brooklyn band led by Nick Eaton-Loss, who aim for the scrappy yet ingenious rock poetry of Jonathan Richman or Ian Dury and sometimes land right on it (Radiator Sabotage), with just an occasional miss. *JB*

Sunflower Bean

★★★

Human Ceremony

FAT POSSUM. **CD/DL/LP**

Embodying the Platonic ideal of Brooklyn buzz bands, this trio nail the drifty euphoric highs of current modern indie on a debut ringing with fuzzed-up melodic sweetness. Alluring, if more cold brewed latte than electric kool aid. *JB*

Cristobal Tapia De Veer

★★

Humans

SILVA SCREEN. **CD/DL**

Compared to his work on C4's Utopia, this new TV soundtrack by the Chilean composer is a bit of a let down. Shimmering electronic waves and rippling beats conjure dystopian dread but fail to excite. *AM*

Witchcraft
NUCLEUS

Witchcraft

★★★★

Nucleus

NUCLEAR BLAST. **CD/DL/LP**

Lauded by both Elijah Wood and Phil Anselmo, Swedish psych-doom crew return with their fifth and most impressive LP to date. Tull vibes inform The Outcast, while Sabs fans will nod sagely at the seismic riffs on offer throughout. *PA*

Wray

★★★★

Hypatia

COMMUNICATING VESSELS. **CD/DL/LP**

Named after a doomed female scholar of Greek antiquity, another woman of uncommon brilliance, Sonic Youth's Kim Gordon, looms over a thrilling LP of rhythmic guitar whir and cool vocal detachment (though the Alabama trio are male). *JB*

NOWSTREAMING

Miss Red

Murder

After completing her obligatory military service, Israeli MC Miss Red reunited with Kevin Martin, aka acid-ragga noisenik The Bug, with whom she'd cut an impromptu 7-inch after a Haifa rave a couple of years before. Now she drops her debut mixtape, a suite of maverick future-dancehall, and while production from Martin and a coterie of like avant-beatmakers keeps things electrified, there's no mistaking that Miss Red is in charge. Juggling menacing Space Invaders low-end with pneumatic rhythms and Miss Red chanting like a post-apocalyptic Sister Nancy, No Guns is a highlight, with fierce speaker-bruising mayhem maintained throughout. (www.miss-red.com) *SC*

COME TOGETHER

The Beatles

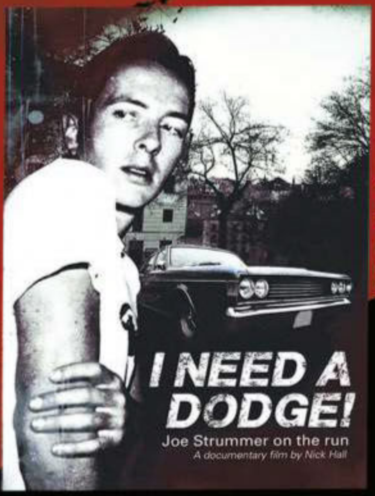
Come Together

The Fabs finally went streaming over Christmas 2015, allowing non-hoarders to clear their "Ono sideboard" of CDs. *Abbey Road*'s opening track was the most accessed song.

Jack White & The Bricks

Dead Leaves And The Dirty Ground

Live, proto-White Stripes music released via Jack's The Vault subscription service. Hear clips via Third Man's SoundCloud.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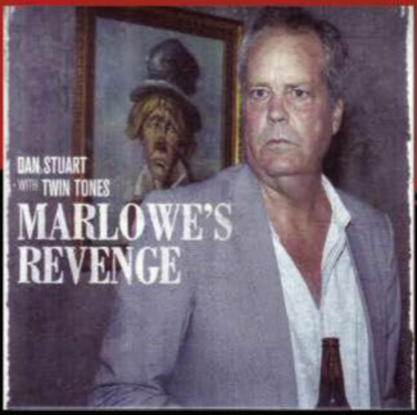
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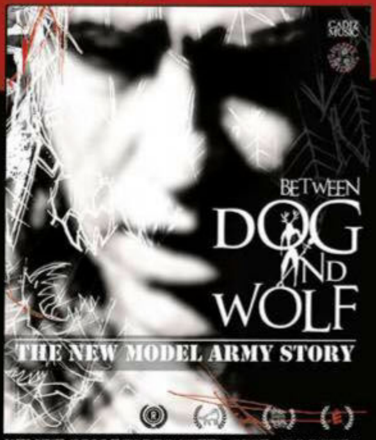
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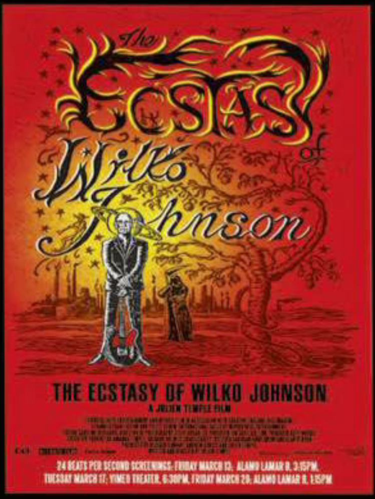
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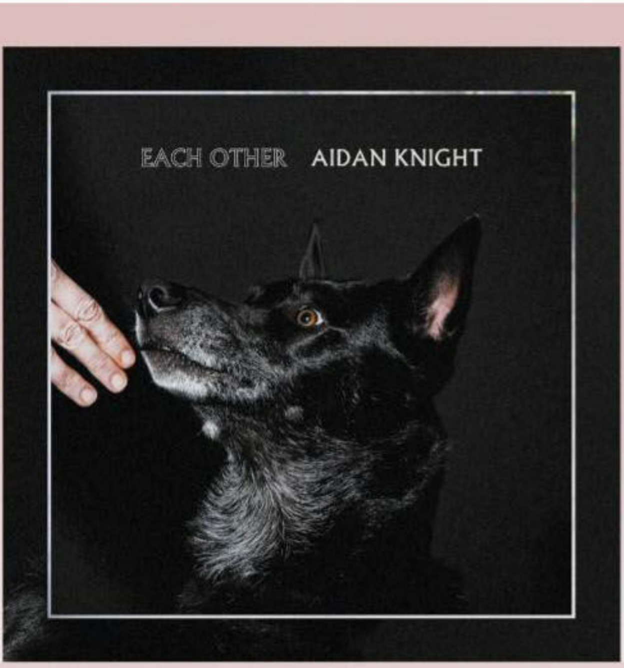
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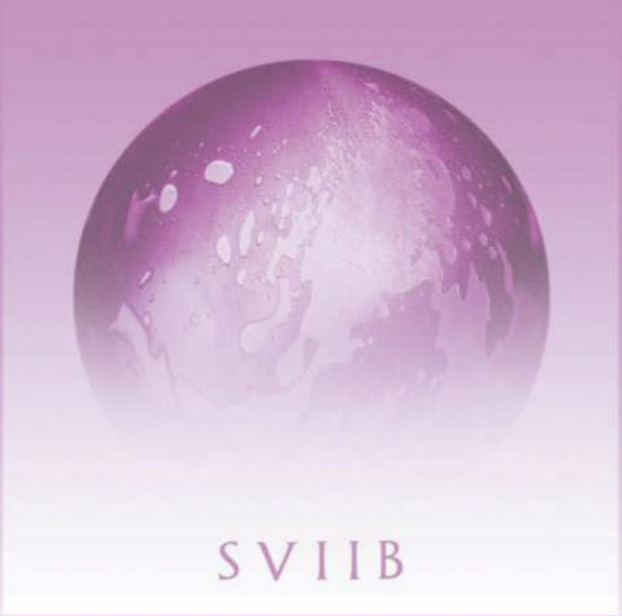

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Recommended Retailers

Here's the exclusive monthly guide to the country's most mouthwatering independent record emporia. Chosen for their knowledge of both current releases and specialist areas, they're guaranteed to provide the personal touch you won't find elsewhere. And they stock MOJO too. All where you see this sign.

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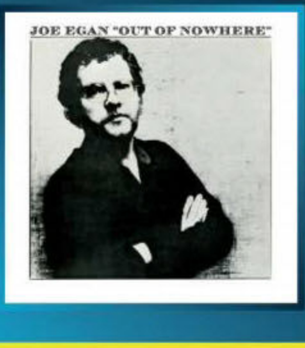

Joe Egan's classic album is now available for the first time on CD. Joe Egan shot to fame as partner with Gerry Rafferty in Stealers Wheel and jointly wrote 'Stuck In The Middle With You' as well as writing 'Star'. The album was produced by Grammy nominated songwriter and producer David Courtney who said that "Joe was a dream artist to produce".
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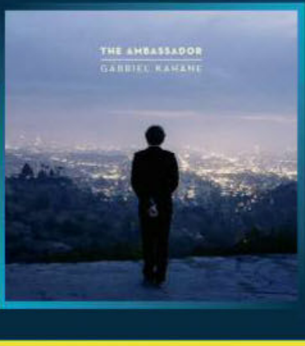

Hailed by Rolling Stone as "one of the year's very best albums", singer songwriter Gabriel Kahane's 'The Ambassador' is a meditation on the underbelly of Los Angeles seen through the lens of ten street addresses.
"There is a darkness at the heart of Gabriel Kahane's lilting, lyrical, loving art songs to Los Angeles... The Ambassador deserves a spot on a bookshelf dedicated to LA." – LA OBSERVED
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Pedal power

Compendious new dream-pop collection demands a rethink of shoe-business. By Victoria Segal.

Various

★★★★

Still In A Dream: A Story Of Shoegaze 1988-1995

CHERRY RED. CD

By 1992, Blur were in a precarious state. A year away from the Britpop lifebelt of *Modern Life Is Rubbish*, they were still socially – if not stylistically – affiliated to The Scene That Celebrates Itself, a collection of bands who gathered at modish London nite-spot Syndrome and provided weekly indie-intrigue for the music press. One faintly dismissive label wasn't enough, though: these bands were largely also 'shoegazers', a reference to their downcast eyes as they negotiated their guitar pedals. The wily Damon Albarn, who had already launched a defensive attack on contemporary indie with Popscene, that March's brassy sneer of a single, knew which way the wind was blowing. "We were never really part of the scene," he told Melody Maker that September, emphatically keeping his distance. "Bands like Chapterhouse, Ride and Slowdive had a wonderful pubescent quality. But they were sort of 'The End Of Indie'. A culmination. It had nowhere else to go."

He had a point. One look at the titles of Ride's output is enough to suggest that shoegazing didn't do forward momentum. Today Forever. Vapour Trails. Nowhere. Going Blank Again. Albarn wasn't the first person to put the boot in, either: Richey Edwards landed an early punch by claiming the Manic Street Preachers hated quintessential Thames Valley dreamers Slowdive "more than Hitler", while reviews had become increasingly savage. These bands were asexual, apolitical, introspective, their "pubescent quality" equated with studenty solipsism. Later, they were a small sigh of watery ennui in the face of grunge's incoming tidal wave of emotion, or a psychedelic dead-end next to Britpop's mainstream outreach. Shoegazing quickly became one of the most reviled genres of the past 25 years, a pretty blip that didn't have the heft to make a cultural impact.

But it wasn't quite that simple. From 2002, when German label Morr Music released Slowdive tribute LP *Blue Skied An' Clear*, the shoegazing revival has persistently bubbled under. There has been nu-gaze, metal-gaze, regular articles proclaiming shoegazing's return. In 2013, My Bloody Valentine released their first LP since 1991's *Loveless* did as much to destroy shoegazing as 1988's *Isn't Anything* had done to inspire it. In the past 18 months, the pace has quickened, Slowdive, Ride, then Lush all returning, ripe for re-evaluation.

The activity now finds a hub with this expansive five-disc set, a collection that strives to prove shoegazing wasn't the insular, "hello-birds-hello-sky" scene of legend. It pulls out its focus as far as it can, drawing in as much music as possible, desperate to prove shoegazing was a broad church (or sonic cathedral). It includes The Flaming Lips and Mercury Rev, Bardo Pond and Seefeel, as well as a raft of second and third raters. Yet for anyone blooded on the early-'90s music press, shoegazing's definition is clear: post-adolescent, post-My Bloody Valentine, hooped jumpers, bowl cuts, lyrics about falling or maybe flying, all the focus of the second disc. Ride's Drive Blind is here, showing why Robert Smith loved them so. Slowdive appear with Slowdive (no solipsism there). There's Lush, whose sensually direct De-Luxe stands out a mile, and Chapterhouse's indie-dance gallop, Falling Down.

If this was all seen as rather provincial, *Still In A Dream* wants to show how well shoegazing travelled. Not just geographically – aside from the UK, and a sizeable US cadre, there's Japan's Coaltar Of The Deepers, Sweden's Whipped Cream, New Zealand's Bailter Space – but also through genres. Bands drift into baggy (Spirea X), indie (Velocity Girl), post-rock (Bark Psychosis), dance (Seefeel) and goth (the still-bewildering Cranes, a Krankies version of Einstürzende Neubauten). It's hard to compare the steely competence of Curve's Ten Little Girls, complete with rap, with the ethereal material of Slowdive; there's a world between the neo-psychedelic scrapings of Catherine Wheel's She's My Friend and the ferocious experimental rush of Aruca by California's dynamic Medicine.

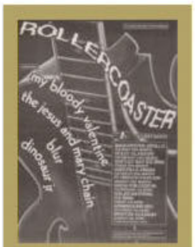
But stick these bands in a room and they'd probably agree on The Jesus And Mary Chain's Rollercoaster, Cocteau Twins' Cherry-Coloured Funk, The House Of Love's Christine, all featured on the excellent first disc, which collects together proto-gaze and its influences. There's no My Bloody Valentine – no Cure, Sonic Youth, or Dinosaur Jr for that matter – but the impulse to get far, far out of it is there in Spacemen 3's Hypnotized, or Loop's Arc-Lite (Sonar). Galaxie 500's Tugboat shows a more urbane side, yet if AR Kane's dubby fugue Baby Milk Snatcher promises anti-Thatcher polemic with its title, it's either about oral sex, or according to Simon Reynolds' contemporary analysis, pre-Oedipal mother-baby bliss.

Avoiding reality can't always be maintained: the quality dips and pitches, occasionally stuck at third on the bill at the Bull And Gate. There are tiny revelations too. Canadian act Majesty Crush's stalker-lament No.1 Fan is a wonderful hazy pop song, while there's a chance to see Moonshake or Moose as more than punchlines to a joke scene. The fifth disc picks up post-rock transmissions with Flying Saucer Attack and Bowery Electric, while noisy Americans Bardo Pond are a long abrasive way from Thames Valley drowse.

Yet by following all these vapour trails, *Still In A Dream* makes an aggressive land-grab on shoegazing's behalf. "In the absence of a way of life/Just repeat this again and again," Albarn sang on Popscene, but shoegazing's very blankness has kept it a compelling, peculiarly flexible aesthetic. After 25 years, it's going nowhere.

KEY TRACKS

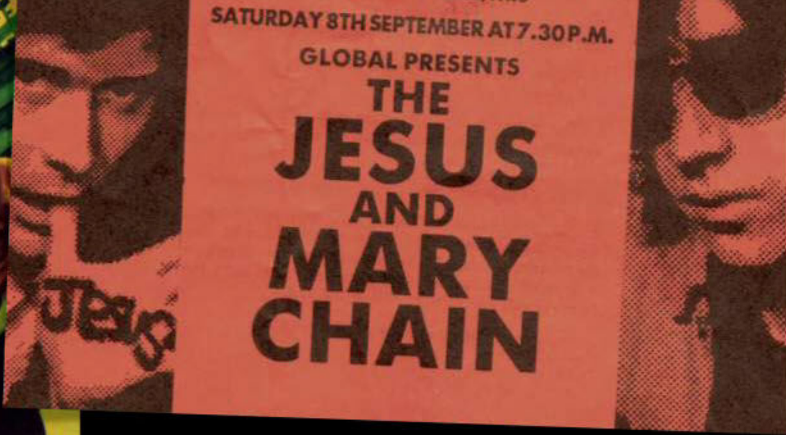
- The Jesus And Mary Chain – Rollercoaster
- Cocteau Twins – Cherry-Coloured Funk
- Lush – De-Luxe
- Slowdive – Slowdive
- Ride – Drive Blind



BACK STORY: ROLLER-COASTER

- The Jesus And Mary Chain's 1990 track Rollercoaster gave its name to the 11-date indie package tour of 1992 that looked like a summit of shoegazing influences and prime movers: the Reid brothers, promoting their *Honey's Dead*; Dinosaur Jr, with fourth LP *Green Mind*; and My Bloody Valentine, whose second LP *Loveless* had razed the boundaries of the scene they had helped to create. Blur were there, too, largely seen as odd ones out, despite their place in the Scene That Celebrates Itself. It was, remembered Jim Reid, "a competition", one with unexpected winners.

> "A SMALL SIGH OF WATERY ENNUI IN THE FACE OF GRUNGE'S INCOMING TIDAL WAVE OF EMOTION."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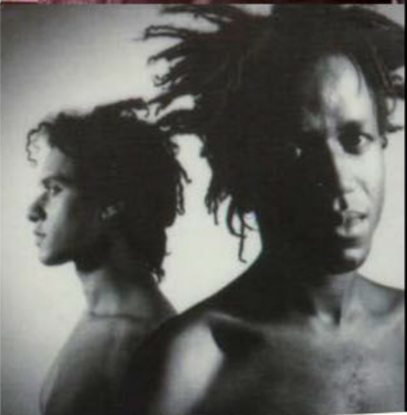
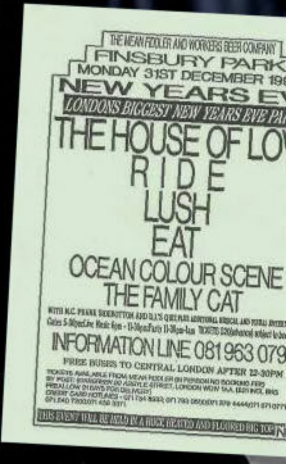
Beautiful dreamers: (clockwise from this image) Slowdive; House Of Love; Cranes; Cocteau Twins; AR Kane; Galaxie 500; The Jesus And Mary Chain with poster; (insets) Spacemen 3 and Loop singles, assorted handbills.

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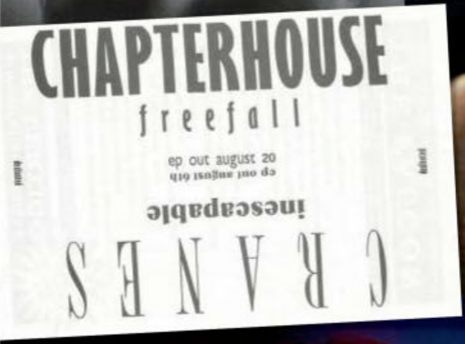

CHAPTERHOUSE

freefall

ep out august 20

ep out august 6th

inescapable

CRANES

Eji Oyewole
Charity begins at Home

Eji Oyewole

★★★★

Charity Begins At Home

BBE. CD/DL/LP

Spectacular first album by Nigerian multi-instrumentalist, who's worked with Marley, Miles et al.

Issued as a limited pressing for EMI Nigeria in 1979, Eji Oyewole's debut is an African funk classic, founded on highlife with its eddying percussion and pushing boundaries with its central use of impetuous horns. Oyewole provides the backbone, singing, playing sax, piano, flute, percussion and co-producing the album. He also writes the four tracks, each one a stinging call to arms, ranging from four to 10 minutes in length. The title track and Unity In Africa (Kasowopo Kasekan) are screaming funk with brass, piano and guitar coiling around Oyewole's bawling message to the brotherhood; Gele Odun (Oil Boom) begins with a haunting flute refrain before the band hit their potent groove punctuated by Oyewole's frenzied chants. Lagos Complex – Highways, is the most conventional-sounding, but full of enchantment nevertheless.

Lois Wilson

Colleen

★★★★

Everyone Alive Wants Answers

LEAF. LP

French artist's wonky-yet-sublime 2003 debut out as part of the Leaf label's 20th anniversary celebrations.

Cécile Schott (aka Colleen) recently completed promotion of *Captain Of None*, her ambitiously dub reggae-inspired, viola da gamba-propelled and vocally decorated fifth album – which, superficially at least, feels like quite a leap from this all-instrumental opening salvo, with its fuzzy, sampler-enabled textures and song structures that continually threaten imminent collapse. Based on heavily processed, yet always disarmingly naïve-sounding, loops of cello, organ and miscellaneous percussion, this is nominally electronic music as an expression not of Ballardian dystopias or stark chromium futures, but of woozily organic internalised worlds, waking dreams and 'fail again, fail better' humanity. Whether it's the wow and flutter-bedecked, ever-ascending Your Heart On Your Sleeve, Ritournelle's cut-up ghost-waltz or the title track's kaleidoscopic mêlée of wind chimes, string drones, bird song and disintegrating fairground melodies, this is music whose curiously magical lustre remains entirely undimmed by time.

David Sheppard

The Sunset Strip

★★★★

Stone Lazy

AGITATED. CD

Lost third album from sun-baked Australian psych-rockers finally released.

Active from the late '80s to early '90s but largely unheralded outside Australia, in their heyday Melbourne's The Sunset Strip carved a niche in the Oz rock underground with a singularly smeared take on psychedelia. Intended to follow-up two blistering EPs on Dog Meat, what should have been the crowning culmination of their '90s output lay unreleased for 20-odd years as the label folded and the band fell apart. Rescued from limbo by Sunset mainstays Warwick Brown and Andy Turner, *Stone Lazy* veers between soaring psych-sludge, bong-huffing guitar jams and hazy downer blues. Bearing heavy-lidded comparison to six-string blazers like Neil Young and J. Mascis while perhaps not as consistently on the money as 1990's *Move Right In*, this is still an indispensable addition to The Sunset Strip's undersung canon.

Andrew Carden

The Sunset Strip: bong-huffing psych-sludge.

Lee Michaels

The Complete A&M Album Collection

★★★★

Heighty Hi: The Best Of Lee Michaels

★★★★

MANIFESTO. CD/DL

Two catalogue releases give the king of the organ his due.

Keyboards never sounded more commanding than in the overlooked work of Lee Michaels. Between 1967 and 1972, Michaels cut seven albums that gave the chords of a Hammond organ as much bite as the riffs of a rock guitar. Now re-released for the first time in nearly two decades as either a 7-CD box set or a 20-song *Best Of*. The songs sprawl with psychedelic soul, while Michaels' voice has a gospel-tinged, R&B flair as he peppered his songs with a jaunty piano. He could even gave a deadpan harpsichord expression. Though Michaels stopped recording in the mid-'80s, after scoring just one hit, Do You Know What I Mean, these releases confirm his status as a stalwart American answer to Steve Winwood.

Jim Farber

ARTHUR LEE & LOVE

Arthur Lee & Love

★★★

Coming Through To You: The Live Recordings (1970-2004)

ROCKBEAT. CD

Box set of concert rarities from ahead-of-his-time psychedelicist.

By the time this collection begins, Love had already suffered public indifference, drug casulaties and Lee's aversion to touring. Disc one finds the band in Europe, 1970, powering through, because what other option was there? My Little Red Book's polished charm becomes slurry and leering. Product Of The Times carries its disdain for poseurs as a burden and its Hendrixy sound as a badge of honour. Disc two (1990s) is mostly acoustic renditions of Love classics, while disc three (2000s) finds Lee and Baby Lemonade recreating Love's '60s masterworks. On The Red Telephone, Lee lays hard on the "freedom" lyric – fitting, as he was released from prison six months prior. Disc four cobbles fan recordings. Three unreleased songs are slight compositions – though the title I'll Get Lucky Some Sweet Day seems to sum the longing that drove Lee.

Chris Nelson

Sonny Sharrock

★★★★

Ask The Ages

M.O.D. TECHNOLOGIES. CD/DL/LP

Free jazz guitar maven's finest hour reissued.

Sonny Sharrock
Ask The Ages

Though his asthma stopped him taking up the saxophone and following in the footsteps of his musical idol John Coltrane, Sharrock always attacked his guitar with the mentality of a horn player. A sideman with Herbie Mann and Miles Davis (he appeared on the latter's *Jack Johnson* LP), Sharrock forged a unique avant-garde style with a succession of solo albums that began with 1969's *Black Woman*. Originally released on Bill Laswell's Axiom imprint in 1991, *Ask The Ages* finds the guitarist leading a quartet featuring saxophonist Pharoah Sanders and ex-Coltrane drummer Elvin Jones. It's an extraordinary summit of free thinking improv that blends wild, incandescent freak-outs (Promises Kept) with blissful moments of serene melodic beauty (Who Does She Hope To Be?). Three years later, Sharrock was dead at 53, but this album remains a towering monument to his genius.

Charles Waring

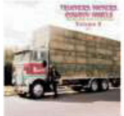
Various

★★★★

Truckers, Kickers, Cowboy Angels – Volume 6 (1973)

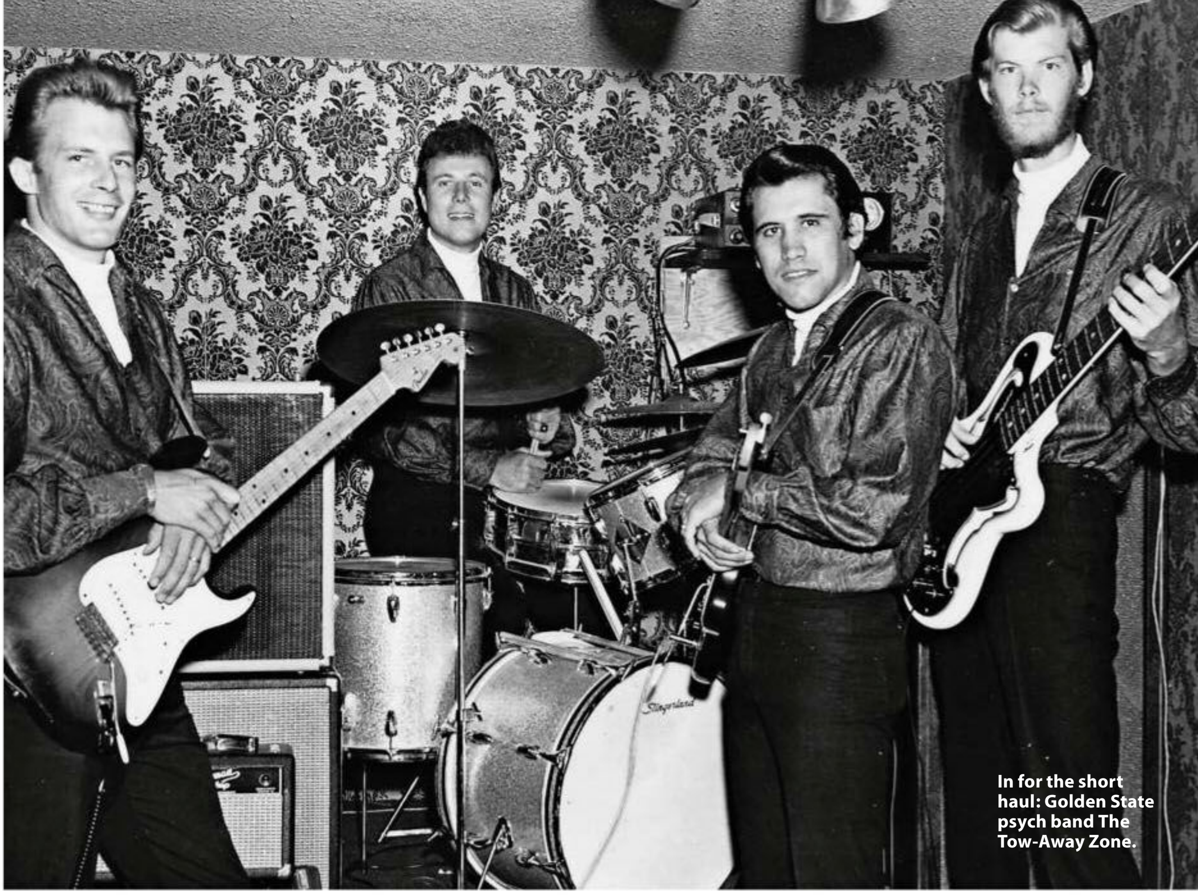
BEAR FAMILY. CD/DL

Country rock: the Austin influence and more.



In 1973, as Colin Escott's extensive sleevenotes recall, the focus on country rock began shifting from Los Angeles to Austin. But this immaculately assembled, 46-track, 2-CD compilation doesn't entirely dwell on this aspect of Outlaw and upwards, but seeks to cover more bases, ranging from Willie Nelson's ground-breaking, R&B toughened Shotgun Willie, through to such truly memorable songs as such as Dennis Linde's Burning Love, Townes Van Zandt's Pancho & Lefty, Billy Joe Shavers' Old Five And Dimers Like Me, alongside choice cuts by Earl Scruggs, Gram Parsons, J.J. Cale, Little Feat, Michael Nesmith, The Band, the Allmans and others. Even Dylan pops up on Doug Sahm's (Is Anybody Going To) San Antone. Impressive – and more.

Fred Dellar



In for the short haul: Golden State psych band The Tow-Away Zone.

The Pop Group

★★★★

For How Much Longer Do We Tolerate Mass Murder?

FREAKS R US. CD/DL/LP

Bristolian 1980 agit-funk greats, on CD for first time.

There's film footage of Nick Cave praising The Pop Group and their track We Are All Prostitutes: "… the most amazing beginning I've ever heard of any song… your life is changed, forever." The Pop Group's desperate urgency galvanised Cave's The Birthday Party. But as the Australians sought catharsis in personal explosions, The Pop Group had broader concerns. Featuring such enduring musical forces as Mark Stewart and Gareth Sager, they railed wildly against poverty and imperialism. Sager's later group, Rip Rip + Panic, made a TV appearance on The Young Ones – a conjunction with Rik Mayall's comically socialist "people's poet" character that, at one remove, hinted at The Pop Group's unedited idealism. But the exhilarating surge of their music negated such quibbling – with squealing sax that prefigured Public Enemy's siren-like samples and hi-hat like smashing glass. The vinyl issue has agit-print poster art.

Roy Wilkinson

Various

★★★

Golden State Psychedelia

ACE. CD

SF bands who mostly didn't even make foot of the bill.

Of the 25 tracks here, 17 are previously unreleased. Of the balance, only two were issued at the time: the rest were collected on a deleted 1997 CD. Bands featured on this alternate, non-canonical story of San Francisco psych include Celestial Hysteria, Short Yellow and Magician, whose 1970 archive find Fuck For Peace could be the MC5 if they had been force-fed Chambers Brothers records. The source material is the tapes recorded at the SF studio Golden State Recorders. Although nothing sounds like a hit or a potential Quicksilver Messenger Service, there are gems aplenty. The trio of Bristol Boxkite tracks win with their poppy, Association-ish take on the freaky, while Short Yellow are revealed to be jazz-leaning, contrapuntal weirdos. And Celestial Hysteria? A crackers, modal, Jefferson Airplane version of Mad River. Time, again, to rewrite history.

Kieron Tyler

Various

★★★

Steelyard Blues OST

REAL GONE MUSIC. CD

Roots-rock rompin' amidst non-conformist revelry.

Released in 1973, Steelyard Blues was a quiet gem of a Watergate-era anti-establishment comedy with A-list actors, and a product of a time when it felt like we had won – "we" being the freaky, left-wing misfits later saddled with the sterile handle "counterculture". (Nobody called it that back then.) Its soundtrack was a joint effort by Bay Area musical migrants, produced by Nick Gravenites and joined by his Chicago blues brethren Mike Bloomfield and Paul Butterfield, and sirens Maria Muldaur and Annie Sampson. The rootsy, good-timey music – doo wop, soul, country, Delta blues – is upbeat and reflects the film's message that the good guys will win. Who won and who lost has been debated for 40-plus years, but there's something comforting in both soundtrack and film: a refreshing optimism that is more than a little bittersweet in 2016.

Michael Simmons

King Curtis

★★★★

The Complete Atco Singles

REAL GONE. CD/DL

Magisterial tribute to legendary R&B saxophonist.

Friday, August 13, 1971, was the day 37-year-old 'King' Curtis Ousely was stabbed to death outside his apartment in New York. An in-demand sideman as well as a prolific recording artist in his own right, Curtis played a mean tenor saxophone whose distinctive raspy timbre appeared on a host of classic recordings, including The Coasters' Yakety Yak, Buddy Holly's Reminiscing and John Lennon's *Imagine* album. This great 3-CD retrospective brings together for the first time all of the Texan tenor's 45s for Atlantic's Atco subsidiary during two stints at the label. Featuring 66 remastered tracks (including his biggest Atco hit, 1967's immortal Memphis Soul Stew), the material veers from rambunctious R&B instrumentals and sensuous ballads to soul and pop covers, funked-up groove jams and even a sax-led take on Led Zeppelin's Whole Lotta Love. A superb portrait of a forgotten master.

Charles Waring

Gussie Clarke

★★★★

To The Foundation

17 NORTH PARADE. CD/DL/LP

Rare roots and classic dancehall by very consistent Jamaican producer.

Augustus 'Gussie' Clarke began producing in the early 1970s, scoring hits with the debut albums of Big Youth and I Roy. Respected for his fairness as well as his general professionalism, he upped things a notch in the dancehall era with his own Music Works studio, yielding some of the biggest dancehall chart-toppers of the late '80s and early '90s. This double-disc compilation collects some of his rarest roots material, and balances that with his most successful hits of the dancehall era; thus, CD1 has I Roy's cut of Gregory Isaacs' Loving Pauper, Augustus Pablo's killer No Entry and Big Youth's deejay counterpart, Strictly Rockers, while CD2 has Isaacs' Rumours, JC Lodge's Telephone Love, Shabba Ranks' Mr Lover Man and Cocoa Tea's Pirates Anthem. In a short documentary DVD, Gussie and his team explain how it all happened.

David Katz

The Dells

★★★★

Freedom Means…

SOUL MUSIC/CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL. CD/DL

Legendarily long-lived Chicago act's overlooked soul gem resurrected.

Beginning as doo wop act The El-Rays in 1953, this versatile quintet from Harvey, Illinois, scored their first chart hit as The Dells three years later with the immortal and much-covered Oh What A Nite. Their potential as an album act wasn't realised until they joined Chess Records' Cadet imprint in 1968 and teamed up with genius producer/arranger Charles Stepney. One of their most ambitious and imaginative long players was this one, which inexplicably – given its high quality and absorbing content – has never been reissued before. It's masterfully helmed by Stepney, who creates a symphonic song cycle that combines The Dells' lush, layered harmonies with their stirring, gospel-infused lead vocals and opulent orchestration. Significantly, the soul-folk troubadour Terry Callier co-wrote six of the tunes and there's also a soulful reconfiguration of Bread's Make It With You.

Charles Waring

African Head Charge

★★★

My Life In A Hole In The Ground

ON U SOUND CD/DL/LP

Psychedelic dub riposte to Brian Eno. The first of four simultaneous reissues.

Although its title was a disrespectful pop at Brian Eno's 'vision of a psychedelic Africa' on 1981's David Byrne collaboration *My Life In The Bush Of Ghosts*, Adrian Sherwood initially struggled to put the elevated concept into practice. The young On-U Sound head honcho constructed a virtual band based around Creation Rebel percussionist Bonjo Iyabinghi Noah and sundry reggae session men, whose furtive dub basslines, jew's harp and marauding elephant horns waged battle with Sherwood's backwards mixing experiments and Noah's vast array of hand-drums. While David Lynch used Faraway Chant to score an already tense torture scene in Wild At Heart, this trippy, spaced-out foundation stone made much more sense after 1985's landmark drum and sample-fest, *Off The Beaten Track*.

Andy Cowan

Rock'n'roll suicide: This Heat chill out (from left) Charles Bullen, Gareth Williams and Charles Hayward.

Hot fuzz

The vinyl reissue of the experimental trio's 1979 debut sounds as striking and out of time now as ever. By Mike Barnes.

This Heat

★★★★

This Heat

LIGHT IN THE ATTIC. LP

DRUMMER AND vocalist Charles Hayward had played in Quiet Sun with Phil Manzanera as the salad days of prog rock were wilting. But by late 1975 he had formed This Heat with guitarist, vocalist and multi-instrumentalist Charles Bullen and Gareth Williams on guitars, keyboards and tapes. An untrained, instinctive musician, Williams was the rogue element but he possessed, as Hayward said, a "great pair of ears". And that was of vital importance as this music was born from a regime of daily rehearsal and is so singular that it feels that the musicians' main influences must have been each other.

The group emerged into a milieu of punk, but were always musical outsiders, which is what continues to make them so fascinating. They were already known as a live group of daunting intensity and after a minute, the signal noise of Testcard is rudely interrupted by Horizontal Hold, a brutally pared down instrumental groove with double speed hi-hats, like Can with all the melody stripped out. Bullen strums one chord that becomes progressively more distorted, while Williams offers a 'bassline' of baleful groanings, rhythmic taped sounds and, later, sheets of atonal keyboards.

This Heat had more such 'big numbers', but were equally adept at meditative abstract sound. The album was recorded on 24-track at The Workhouse studio, on 8-track at their Brixton studio, Cold Storage, and cassette recordings of rehearsals or live shows – whatever medium best purveyed the mood. From the Workhouse sessions, the oddly funky 24 Track Loop, obliquely nods towards dub and anticipates dance. Producer David Cunningham of Flying Lizards remembered studio co-owner Manfred Mann eavesdropping on some of the amazing sounds they were producing. Not Waving is sung by Hayward in a distressed, Robert Wyatt-like whine to the clanking of ships' bells, sombre clarinet and eerie foghorn-like notes as the song's protagonist ventures further out into the cold sea.

The exhalations and koto-like guitar on Music Like Escaping Gas are inscrutably strange and The Fall Of Saigon rides out on a clanking tape loop redolent of Eastern ritual percussion. It's a darkly humorous account of the privations in the American embassy during the events of 1975, with Bullen's guitar squalling like an air raid at the close.

This Heat would gravitate more towards songs on the Cold War paranoia-fuelled *Deceit* (1981). This is also released on vinyl, as is their finest moment, the 12-inch single, Health And Efficiency (1980). It sums up the group's approach, with its avant pop chorales and hypnotic, crunching instrumental sections, while the B-side, Graphic/Varispeed, is 10 minutes of tone manipulation.

Various

★★★

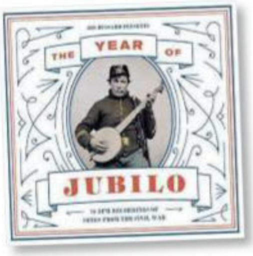
Joe Bussard Presents The Year Of Jubilo

DUST-TO-DIGITAL. CD/DL

Digital issue of American Civil War-era songs taken from old 78rpm discs.

There's enough on this set (culled from the behemoth trove of vintage wax collector Joe Bussard) to spark an entire book. Interested in history? The linernotes highlight the role fiddlers played in reuniting combatants from the American Civil War – though of course, black and white musicians were barred from competing against each other. Musicology? Pass Around The Bottle illustrates old-time music's adaptability, first by inverting the abolition anthem John Brown's Body, and then by concerning itself mostly with drinking. Several songs here raise a flag for the abolitionist's cause. The Year Of Jubilo, penned before emancipation, imagines a master on the run and slaves controlling the plantation. Of course, these are white voices singing the black experience; words like "darky" offend the modern ear. It's hard to hear – history often is – but worth the listening just the same.

Chris Nelson



LARRY YOUNG IN PARIS

Larry Young

★★★★

Larry Young In Paris: The ORTF Recordings

RESONANCE. CD/DL

New Jersey's jazz Hammond organ hero captured in France.

Larry Young's death at the age of 38 in 1978 brought the curtain down prematurely on a career that had begun so brightly. A New Jersey-born organ prodigy whose pioneering approach to the Hammond B3 was indebted to John Coltrane, Young was also a key contributor to the birth of jazz-rock in 1969, playing in Tony Williams' Lifetime alongside John McLaughlin and appearing on Miles Davis's *Bitches Brew* album. This fascinating 2-CD package draws on the studio archives of French broadcaster ORTF, and revisits 1964/5 when Young, newly signed to Blue Note, was working in Paris alongside trumpet protégé Woody Shaw in the Nathan Davis Quartet. Some of the performances are sensational, as is the sound quality, while an accompanying 68-page booklet detailing Young's Paris sojourn takes jazz research to a new level.

Charles Waring

Joybringing Murmaids (front) with less than charming producer Kim Fowley (back, centre).

Ornette Coleman Quartet

★★★

The Love Revolution

SOLAR. CD

Jazz's freethinker captured in Italy.

ORNETTE COLEMAN

Armed with an innocuous-looking white plastic alto saxophone, Coleman arrived in New York from Los Angeles in 1959 and promptly tore the Big Apple jazz scene apart with an iconoclastic new sound and style that dispensed with orthodox notions of melody, harmony and structure. The reverberations from Coleman's free jazz revolution were still echoing round the world in 1968 when the saxophonist and his band (comprising twin bassists Charlie Haden and David Izenzon with Ed Blackwell on drums) travelled to Italy on their European tour. Their two shows at Rome and Milan demonstrate how Coleman's thirst to expand his musical vocabulary resulted in him adding trumpet and an Indian wind instrument called a shenai to his musical armoury. Sonically, the Rome concert is much superior to the Milan set, featuring a superb version of Coleman's classic Lonely Woman.

Charles Waring

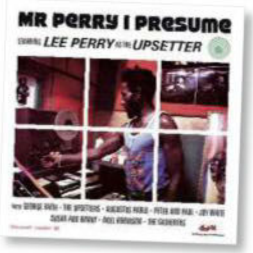
VINYL PACKAGE OF THE MONTH

Bert Jansch

Avocet

EARTH

In an ideal world, any mention of Bert Jansch would be preceded by the epithet 'The Great'. Even so, for £40 you'd want something special from one of the erstwhile Pentangle guitarist's most beloved solo albums. Originally a Dutch release in 1978, although later licensed through Charisma, Jansch's support of the RSPB saw him name all six tracks after birds (Avocet, Lapwing, Kittiwake et al) but the titles are just as relevant in the way he ducks and weaves along the grooves. Mostly it sounds like he's sitting round his kitchen table while Danny Thompson plays bass, Martin Jenkins adding mandocello, violin and cups of tea. The added value comes from lithograph prints of the six birds by illustrator Hannah Alice that serve as alternative sleeves, but the star remains Jansch's beautifully expressed and greatly missed guitar. *AF*



Lee 'Scratch' Perry

★★★★★

Mr Perry I Presume

PRESSURE SOUNDS. CD/DL

Fabulous fourth volume of obscure Black Ark mixes.

There's no such thing as a bad comp of '70s Lee Perry productions, it seems. In that decade, everything he did was magic. Now that the overwhelming majority of Scratch's 'official' vocal tracks and dubs have been documented someplace or other, Pressure Sounds' ongoing series collecting super-rare mixes – often literally one-off dubplates, cut for sound systems in JA – has illuminated further depths to the Upsetter's genius. This latest instalment is absolutely from the top drawer, excavating unheard versions on Black Ark classics such as Police And Thieves, Chase The Devil and Groovy Situation – rather like reggae's answer to *Sgt. Pepper* outtakes. For Bob Marley buffs, there's a swirly mix of Sun Is Shining, and a Keep On Moving tootled on melodica by Augustus Pablo. This writer's fave, however, has to be an alternate Washroom Skank, with percussion squeaks from a toy parrot. For newcomers and trainspotters alike, it's wildly colourful, quality stuff.

Andrew Perry

The Murmaids

★★★

A Few Of The Things We Love

ACE. CD

Joyful music plus warts'n 'all story of the Popsicles And Icicles hitmakers.

The Murmaids

According to the linernotes of this first-time complete collection of the Los Angeles female trio, their producer Kim Fowley told band-member Terry Fischer she was "an ugly bitch" and "the only way you're ever going to get laid is if you have a Number 1 record." It was 1963, she was 17 and at her first recording session. The David Gates-penned song the abusive Fowley was getting on tape was the twinkling Popsicles And Icicles. It hit Number 1 in Record World. Extraordinarily, even though their money was purposely withheld, The Murmaids continued with Fowley as they felt a loyalty to their label. Over 21 tracks, and despite the surrounding nonsense, everything on *A Few Of The Things We Love* reflects joy: from 1964's roller-rink music/Lesley Gore hybrid Wild And Wonderful to a fuzz guitar-punctuated 1968 romp through Traffic's Paper Sun. Unlike Fowley, The Murmaids charmed.

Kieron Tyler

Capitol K

★★★★

Island Row

FAITH AND INDUSTRY. CD/DL/LP

Revisiting the folktronic pioneer's ever-intriguing early sorties.

At the turn of the 21st century, the music of Kristian Craig Robinson – a lo-fi mix of smiley indie pop, ambient noise, discordance and sampleadelic echoes from the last days of trip-hop – seemed otherworldly and endearingly unique. With it, Robinson, who had been snapped up by the ever-resourceful Mike Paradinas for his Planet Mu label, all but single-handedly invented the 'folktronic' genre. His two early albums as Capitol K – 1999's *Sounds Of The Empire* and, in the following year, *Island Row* – predated that folktronic yardstick, Four Tet's *Pause*, by a year. Here re-released, they sound as beguiling as they did 15 years ago. Robinson's stock has continued to rise since, working as a producer for the likes of Deerhunter. The glitch-meets-vitamin C blast of Pillow and Heat's melancholic campfire laptop'n'guitar mash-up, however, remain potent reminders of where it all started.

Stephen Worthy

FILEUNDER

Let it grow

The unhurried first decade of Eric Clapton's solo career. By Jim Irvin.

Emotional fuel: Eric Clapton and Patti Harrison outside his home at Hurtwood Edge, Ewhurst, Surrey, January 1975, a few months after the release of *461 Ocean Boulevard*.

Eric Clapton found himself to be a reluctant figure in the spotlight, after the ego face-offs of Cream and Blind Faith, and spent the '70s finding a way to retreat from the crasser aspects of stardom with music that was reliant on feel and groove rather than any grandstanding in the writing or playing. A life rippled with tragedy, emotional confusion and addiction reached the world outside as resolutely tasteful music.

The Studio Albums 1970-1981 is a box-set of eight vinyl LP reissues (with a download card) of all his solo studio releases for Polydor and RSO. Debut *Eric Clapton* (★★) was recorded with fellow-travellers Delaney & Bonnie – Blind Faith's support act – and shares their crowded, jammy sound, witness the over-egged cover of JJ Cale's After Midnight, Eric's first US solo hit. He pinched Delaney & Bonnie's rhythm section for double album *Layla & Other Assorted Love Songs*, credited to Derek & The Dominos (★★★★), which turned out to be a study in turmoil, Eric's infatuation for George Harrison's wife, Patti, lending emotional fuel. The ragged spontaneity and warm Tom Dowd production make it a good entry point if you've never explored Clapton's post-'60s work. The wilful anonymity of its presentation and sprawling quality of the music may be the reason it was a comparatively poor seller.

Years passed while Eric struggled with heroin addiction, until 1974's *461 Ocean Boulevard* (★★★) signalled the return of his interest in music, not coincidentally around the time that a relationship with Patti began. It's a concise 10-track stroll through some favourite moods, frisky blues, mellow gospel, relaxed shuffles and, of course, his smash take on I Shot The Sheriff, sniffed at now but actually useful in introducing Bob Marley's music to a wider world. *461* set the former god of electric blues on the road to becoming a future king of corporate hospitality.

There's One In Every Crowd (★★) was a less captivating rerun of the *461* formula, the reggae version of Swing Low Sweet Chariot surely a testing moment for modern ears. It also marks the arrival of Marcia Levy (aka Marcella Detroit) who'd appear on six future LPs.

1976's *No Reason To Cry* (★★★), recorded with The Band and with an unrecorded Dylan song, Sign Language, was well made and played but oddly unsatisfying. Engaging Glyn Johns to produce *Slowhand* (★★★★) made the difference. Opening track Cocaine leaps from the stereo. Wonderful Tonight is undeniably intimate and the rest has energy and a purpose previously absent. It sold about five million more copies than anything else. Follow-up *Backless* (★★★★), made with the same team, may be the better record but was unfashionable in '78, while a return to Tom Dowd for 1981's *Another Ticket* (★★★) produced a better-than-decent album.

Slowhand aside, it was Clapton's records of the '90s that'd be his best sellers. He was just warming up.

> "A LIFE RIPPLED WITH TRAGEDY AND ADDICTION REACHED THE WORLD AS RESOLUTELY TASTEFUL MUSIC."

ERIC CLAPTON

DERROLL ADAMS

Derroll Adams

★★★

Banjo Troubadour

STARMAN. LP

Based in Belgium since 1958 after his touring partnership with Ramblin' Jack Elliott, the Oregon-born banjo player recorded erratically, so these performances for Belgian radio are significant. The balladeer is at his friendly fireside best. *AM*

THE BOLSHOI

The Bolshoi

★★★

Five Albums

BEGGARS ARCHIVE. CD

Top value box of London four- piece's debut EP (for misan-thropic goth disc hit Happy Boy), three '80s LPs, their unreleased fourth and a fifth disc of demos and live cuts. Goth aggro to second-tier doom pop: the '80s in microcosm. *JB*

JOHN LEE HOOKER

John Lee Hooker

★★★★

The Country Blues

SOUL JAM. CD

Raw yet charmingly assured, Hooker's 1959 album of almost spoken-word blues backed by his charismatic strummed guitar is enhanced with eight recordings from 1951-61, notably a heart-on-the sleeve take of Ramblin' By Myself. *PS*

Elmore James

★★★★

Dust My Broom

BLUES CHARACTERS. CD

One of a series of 30 2-CD packs on blues greats. Booklets in French and English; music from the crucial creative periods here spanning – EJ's title track ('51 and '59 versions) to Look On Yonder Wall (but not B-side Shake Your Moneymaker). *GB*

PENETRATION
The Virgin Years

Penetration

★★★

The Virgin Years

VIRGIN. CD

County Durham band's two LPs from 1978/79, plus '80's "official bootleg" *Race Against Time* and generous disc of Peel sessions, which makes their idiosyncratic guitars and Pauline Murray's strident vocal sound more art than punk. *JB*

FRANK SINATRA SINGS
GEORGE GERSHWIN

Frank Sinatra

★★★★

...Sings George Gershwin

BLACK COFFEE. CD

Released alongside a set of Sinatra's Cole Porter songs, this single disc brings together tracks from 1944-62 that find The Voice adding a life-worn warmth and Rat Pack fizz to Gershwin's best loved songs. *PS*

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The Telescopes

★★★★

Splashdown

CHERRY RED. CD

Bringing together four EPs, *#Untitled Second* album and bonus tracks by the Burton-on-Trent band for Creation, '90-92. Stephen Lawrie and co's widescreen-yet-focused cosmic-indie unfolds in sparkling bursts over 2CDs. *PS*

THE P&P RECORDS
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ANTHOLOGY
COMPILED BY
BILL BREWSTER

Various

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The P&P Records Funk & Rap Anthology

HARMLESS/DEMON. CD

Loving 3-CD comp of vibrant Div 2 New York rap, disco and funk on Peter Brown's scrappy umbrella label (1976-85) by expert Bill Brewster. Enjoy awesome cash-in electro-disco of Shift's Roller Rink Funk. *DE*

Rex Features

Georges Brassens

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The Essential…

JACKPOT. CD

Serviceable 2CDs, 1952-62, of the moustachioed wit of French chanson, whose debut 45 about an escaped, sex-mad gorilla was translated by his closest Anglo-phone cuz, Jake Thackray. Mostly just guitar and voice – but plenty of chuckles. *DE*

Michael Chapman

★★★

The Man Who Hated Mornings

SECRET. CD/DL

With a strong line-up of British rockers (Mick Ronson, Keef Hartley, Pete Wingfield, Andy Latimer) in '77, Chapman turned in this sottish set of jaded groovers; like some Yorkshire JJ Cale with three-day stubble. *AM*

The Collins Kids

★★★★

The Rockaway Rock

HOODOO. CD/DL

Compilation of the Oklahoma siblings' Columbia sides from 1955-62; 30 remastered tracks of hepped-up rockabilly, teen Lorrie hiccupping and growling her pulse-beatin' love letters over little bro' Larry's double-neck Mosrite twang. Mercy! *AM*

Dion

★★★★

Born To Be With You

ACE. LP

Unreleased in the US as Dion thought it unfinished, Spector's production too oppressive and dirgy, this grand, ruined masterpiece, hard to find in its original 1975 imprint, has been beautifully remastered to its full ragged melancholy glory. *AM*

Duane Eddy

★★★★

The Twang's The Thang/Songs Of Our Heritage

HOODOO. CD

Two-fer single CD of iconic guitarist Eddy's 1959 and 1960 LPs – both full of playing that goes far beyond mere 'twang'. *Songs Of Our Heritage* is a particular lost gem. *PA*

Little Richard

★★★★

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Three CDs encapsulate Little Richard's early blues roots, his explosive rock'n'roll sides, and his gospel output. Excellent mastering and sleevenotes by the Frémeaux gang, the title says it all: an essential collection. *PA*

Magma

★★★★

Köhnzert Zünd

JAZZ VILLAGE. CD

Eleven-CD box of Christian Zander's secret order of prog-jazz-rock/space opera crazies, live 1975-2011. Four previously available albums and various DVD performances still sound vigorous; unheard 2009 Paris gig reveals huge versatility. *IH*

Mother's Finest

★★★★

Mother's Finest/ Another Mother Further/Mother Factor/Live

RAVEN. CD

Get down to four fine albums that mix hard rock with Sly-style heavy soul. A 2CD Aussie import proving how vital MF were. *PA*

Ennio Morricone

★★★★

I Crudeli

CHERRY RED. LP

Soundtrack to a 1967 spaghetti western begins as Morricone by numbers – military drums, , massed brass, spiky guitar – before jazz piano, mournful cornet and the ghostly voices of Alessandro Alessandroni's I Cantori Moderni lift it aloft. *AM*

Bill Nelson's Orchestra Arcana

★★★

Optimism

ESOTERIC. CD

Released in '88, *Optimism* sees the former Be-Bop Deluxe man experimenting with tape loops, synthesizers and found sounds/voices. The result is an intriguing glimpse of a pre-computerised age. *PA*

Singers & Players

★★★★

Revenge Of The Underdog

ON U SOUND. CD/LP

From 1982, the second LP by the On U gang show featuring Prince Far I, Bim Sherman and more. Melodious roots reggae meets Sherwood's medicinal dub mixing – tasty! Plus 2015's War Of Version EP of old cuts. *IH*

Sparks

★★★★★

The Island Years

UMC/ISLAND. LP

Excellent slim pack of vinyl has *Kimono My House*, *Propaganda*, *Indiscreet* and *Big Beat* ('74-76), plus *The Rest Of Sparks*, '79's *Best Of* retooled. Highly original pop visions from inventive rogue Maels Ron and Russell, who're still at the top of their game. *GB*

The Wake

★★

Make It Loud

LTM. CD

Scots indie quartet (alumnus: Bobby Gillespie) swopped Factory for Sarah after a row over artwork. This 1990 label debut sounds nostalgic for the mid '80s. Includes Crush The Flowers/Carbrain 45. Follow-up *Tidal Wave Of Hype* also out. *DE*

John Williams

★★★

Stars Wars

SONY MUSIC CLASSICAL. CD

Adopt a competitive eating event approach to John Williams' Star Wars scores, over 10 discs, with extras. The prequels remain hard to warm to – let's skip Qui-Gon's Noble End – but the soundtracks to IV to VI still stir the blood. *IH*

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COMING NEXT MONTH

Jeff Buckley, Loretta Lynn, Underworld, White Denim, Flying Saucer Attack, Sonic Youth, James, The Coral, M Ward, Joanna Newsome, Public Service Broadcasting and more.

Loretta Lynn: coming full circle with new album.

Off-licence ram-raiding time: Earl Brutus a man-band not a boy-band (from left) Nick Sanderson, Gordon King, Rob Marche, Jim Fry and Shin-Ya Hayashida; (below) Nick and Shins (right) "talk beer and shouting."

Royal Flush

This month's repressed memory fighting out of rock's subconscious – boozy avant-pub aktions reconcile mid-'90s contradictions.

Earl Brutus

Your Majesty... We Are Here

DECEPTIVE, 1996

Composer David Arnold has kept eminent company in his years working in film and television. His CV includes five Bond movies and acting as musical director at the 2012 Olympics. Yet in 1995 he remixed Life's Too Long, a scabrous glam stomp-along by fringe art-rock agitators Earl Brutus.

"I volunteered to do it," explained Arnold. "Watching them made me feel like punk rock hadn't lost the war."

With origins in Manchester, Sheffield and Bristol, Earl Brutus were old enough to have lived through the days of No Future. Nick Sanderson (voice), Jim Fry (voice), Gordon King (electronics) and Rob Marche (guitar) were Bowie fanatics with subsidiary obsessions with Kraftwerk, Springsteen and Genesis, who formed their masterplan in after-hours west London drinking holes in 1992.

"I'd said, Why don't we do a band?" says early member Stuart Boreman. "A man band, not a boy band. And we'll come out stomping." Possible band names included Mortgage, Artex and Fuck Off. But Earl Brutus – inspired, variously, by an imagined greyhound, the jeans brand, the aftershave and a fictional pub – won the day on the eve of their debut gig, at London's Café de Paris.

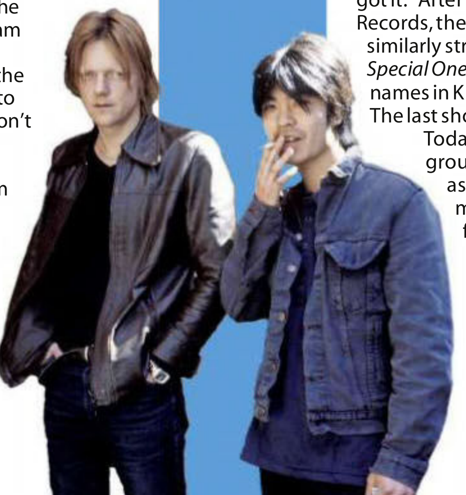
The live shows earned notoriety for brevity, flashbombs, nudity, auto-destruction of gear, and on-stage micturition. "Doing a Brutus gig sober was inconceivable," recalls King. PR agent Robin Turner had difficulty describing the band to prospective media clients. "Like trying to explain rock'n'roll to an alien. Rock'n'roll... and beer 'n'chips, and *men*. Always men, men together – like the musical equivalent of a tightly-packed sauna where The Wild Geese is on telly and there's lukewarm Carling on draught." One performance led to them being signed by Steve Lamacq's Deceptive imprint. Their first release for the label was a one-sided yuletide 45 called Single Seater Xmas, a half-cut melange of synths and noise that topped the indie charts in late 1995. It was to be a peak, of sorts. But the following year's three-sheets-to-the-wind single Navyhead was an anthemic leap forward. King describes the single's narrative: "A young man tripping off his head hallucinating about the armed forces, gay sex and David Bowie."

"We were in a studio on an industrial estate," recalls Jim Fry. "Rob played these amazing glammy descending chords, Gordon put samples on it and ran synths, doing his Eno thing. We became a proper group that afternoon."

Recording continued in Acton and at a residential studios in Lincoln, with song themes and conceptual ideas coming from Fry and Sanderson. King describes the creative model: "Rob and Nick were the musicians, I was the programmer and Jim was the director."

The hours were regular and discipline tight, but there was still time to visit the Grapes pub down the road. Fry recalls a yard-of-ale contest between Sanderson and Digsy, the singer with Merseyside poundshop satirists Smaller, who were also in residence. "Jamie [Jim] put some songs on the jukebox," recalls Marche, "and the locals were all saying, 'Open your clack lad!' Nick won and there was much celebrating and drink."

Album production concluded at The Jesus And Mary Chain's Drugstore studios in Elephant & Castle (Sanderson served as their drummer). For all Earl Brutus's on-stage abandon, there were strong songs within the chaos – replete with big glam beats and Brian May-style harmonic guitars. Indeed, the album title was a message to Queen's dear dear Fred – don't worry, sir, Earl Brutus have arrived to save rock. Alongside the curdled glam heroism of Navyhead, the album includes the unbridled garage rock of Black Speedway and Shrunken Head. There's also surprising solemnity in some furtive sex-shop confessionals. The title for On Me Not In Me came from a prostitute's phone-box flyer. Other lyrical concerns include Barrett Houses, isotonic health drinks and the plight of Shin-Ya Hayashida, a Japanese hairdressing student who had joined the band. His on-stage brief was to drink cans, smoke fags and swear in English and Japanese.



"WATCHING THEM MADE ME FEEL LIKE PUNK ROCK HADN'T LOST THE WAR."

David Arnold

The album was lairy and visceral, but it also suggested a certain strand of conceptual art – Joseph Beuys out with the boys for a catastrophic night on the Reeperbahn, maybe. On occasion at Earl Brutus shows, Jay Jopling – Tracey Emin's art dealer – could be seen looking on covetously. Here was a band with something for both the elevated and base self. Sanderson, who died of cancer in 2008, said: "We're not romantic, we're not good looking but we are the sexiest band in the world... it's basic, ugly and glamorous music, totally sing-alongable."

Despite further strong singles, *Your Majesty...* failed to raise much of a commercial furore. "You couldn't draw a blueprint for success for a band like that," muses Steve Lamacq. "You could just throw great ideas out and hope people got it." After a surprise signing to Island Records, the band pushed on with 1998's similarly striking *Tonight You Are The Special One*; live, they rendered their names in Kraftwerk-style neon signs. The last show was in 2004.

Today Fry leads The Pre New, a group who mine the same veins as Earl Brutus. The former members all look back with fondness, and each has kept his neon name sign. "I have mine on my bookcase," says Marche. "It still works. I occasionally light it up, when people come round."

Roy Wilkinson

CREDITS

Tracks: Navyhead / I'm New / Male Milk / On Me Not In Me / Don't Leave Me Behind Mate / Thelmex / Black Speedway / Motorola / Shrunken Head / Curtsy / Blind Date / Life's Too Long / Karl Brutus / Single Seater Xmas
Producer: Earl Brutus and John Pennington
Recorded: 1996, The Lock Up, Kilburn; Chapel, Lincolnshire; The Drugstore, Elephant & Castle
Released: 1996
Chart peak: n/a
Personnel: Nick Sanderson, Rob Marche, James Fry, Gordon King, Shin-Ya Hayashida, Stuart Boreman
Available: 3 Loop Music reissue. Both Earl Brutus albums are also now available together as a glitter-dipped box set.

Idols, Retna/Photoshot

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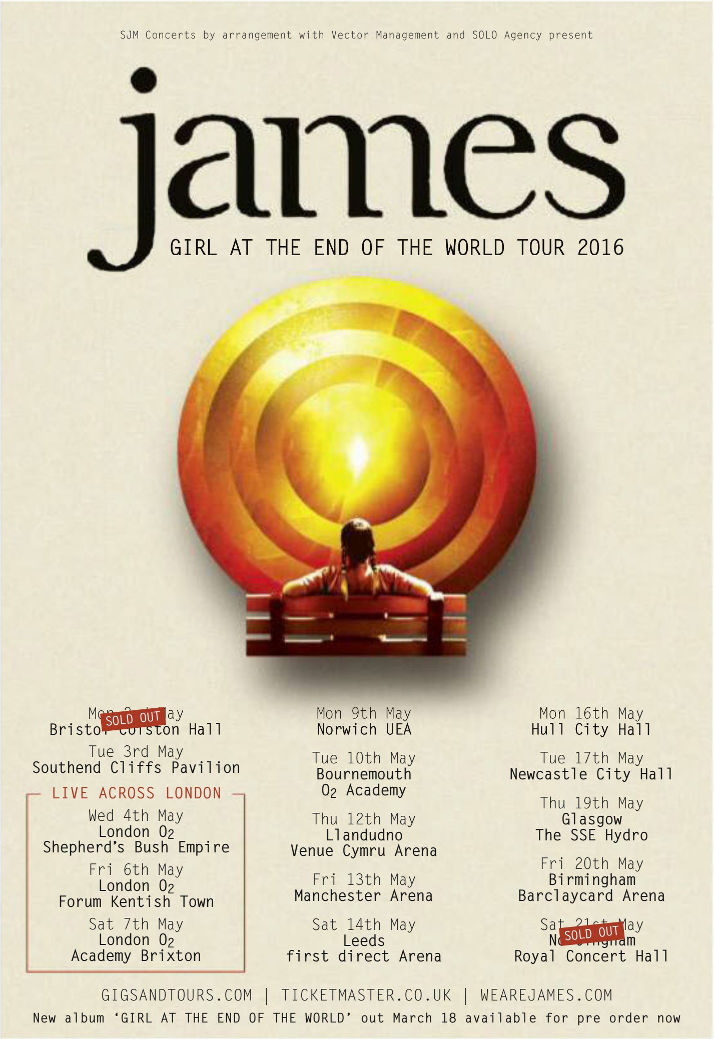

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The Brotherhood (from left) Maurice, Barry and Robin Gibb in the mid '70s; (far right) the threesome ride the disco wave.

GIBBTIME

Bee Gees

Barry, Robin and Maurice.

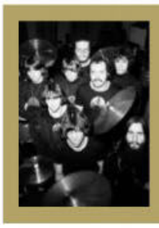
By Pete Paphides.

For anyone who wasn't around to witness the Bee Gees' transition from soft-psych baroque popsmiths to world-beating dispensers of dancefloor manna, the prospect of reconciling these two utterly different groups is a perplexing one. But, of course, in order to weather the pop-cultural hangover heralded by the end of the '60s, the Bee Gees had to change.

Like their bluesier contemporaries Fleetwood Mac, it took them half a decade to hit upon a new winning formula. After the nadir of 1973's unreleased *A Kick In The Head Is Worth Eight In The Pants*, it was 1975's *Main Course* that reminded the Bee Gees what they did best of all. And here also lies the key to syncretise the Gibb brothers' first fame to their '70s renaissance. They were never innovators. At their most successful, the Bee Gees were master assimilators, sniffing the prevailing pop wind, breaking down its constituent parts and replicating it with melodies and harmonies that often eclipsed the best of what their peers had to offer.

> **"[THEY HAD A] PECULIAR POETIC GENIUS FOR WRITING ABOUT LOVE."**

In 1967, that approach yielded *Bee Gees' 1st*. In 1977, it resulted in the scorching FM funk of their hits from the Saturday Night Fever soundtrack and, in the process, shifted 28 million copies of the accompanying OST album. Then, in 1987, it heralded the third act of their career: the machine-tooled introspection of the *E·S·P* album, which featured the chart-topping You Win Again. Drill further into their canon – both on their records and the ones they've penned for the likes of Barbra Streisand, Dionne Warwick and brother Andy – and other recurring themes reveal themselves. As lyricists, the Bee Gees are rarely singled out for credit, but their peculiar, poetic genius for writing about love as though it were an existential affliction connects all three of their phases. The subtext of so many of the Gibbs' best songs seems to be that our time on Earth is only slightly less unbearable with love than without.



CAST YOUR VOTES!

This month you chose your Top 10 Bee Gees albums. Next month we want your Magma Top 10. Send your selections to www.mojo4music.com or e-mail your Top 10 to mojo@bauermedia.co.uk with the subject 'How To Buy Magma' and we'll print the best comments.

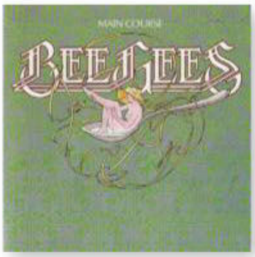
E·S·P Bee Gees

10 Bee Gees E·S·P

WARNER BROS 1987, DOWNLOAD £7.99

You Say: "This is one of the great comeback albums, in my opinion." Catherine Berry, via e-mail

Producer Arif Mardin resurrected the Bee Gees' fortunes again on their 1987 comeback. The emphatic embracing of programmed beats and crystalline synths might have seemed craven were it not for the fact that the group allowed legendary studio magician Mardin to put them through their songwriting paces. Live Or Die (Hold Me Like A Child) and Giving Up The Ghost stood squarely alongside the finest contemporary R&B emerging from America at the time. The only major misstep here is the self-referencing hip-hop breakdown on This Is Your Life, but the infernally catchy title song and the genius of *that* rhythm track on the UK Number 1 You Win Again make ample amends.



4 Bee Gees Main Course

RSO 1975, DOWNLOAD £7.90

You Say: "A superb rebirth, full of quality and fun throughout." Jeremy Lewis, via e-mail

An embrace of R&B on the Arif Mardin-produced *Mr Natural* of 1974 led to a career upswing – enough for the Gibbs to heed the advice of Mardin and Eric Clapton to move operations to Miami to further advance their fortunes. *Main Course* proves just what a wise move this was. If Wind Of Change is the thrilling exposition of the Bee Gees Mk II's new manifesto, Nights On Broadway and Jive Talkin' are the brilliant vindication of it. After being delivered to radio stations in a plain white sleeve (in order to neutralise preconceptions of DJs and programme producers), the latter topped the US charts. Aided by the muscular keyboards of Blue Weaver, this was a rock-solid foundation for the group's late-'70s ascent.

Rex Features (2)

9 Bee Gees
Living Eyes

RSO 1981, DOWNLOAD £7.90

You Say: "They were damned if they did and damned if they didn't, but this was just beautiful." Richard Kemp, via e-mail

The Bee Gees' first of the '80s, saw Barry attempting to pre-empt the disco backlash by handling fewer of the lead vocals, letting loose his falsetto on just two songs, most notably Soldiers, which typifies the mood of an album propelled at greater velocity by the pensive undercurrents of *Spirits Having Flown*. The intimation of some unspecified denouement wasn't unfounded. The dismal American and British sales of *Living Eyes* heralded a six-year break from recording, but if people weren't prepared to embrace the exquisitely textured AOR of the title track, it is hard to imagine any Bee Gees record that could have averted their commercial freefall at this point.

8 Bee Gees
To Whom It May Concern

POLYDOR 1972, DOWNLOAD £7.99

You Say: "I play Sweet Song Of Summer to anyone who doesn't like the pop stuff." Will Barnes, via e-mail

Unfortunately, UK Top 10 success with Run To Me did not carry over to the fortunes of the Bee Gees tenth album. They may have strayed from the pop *Zeitgeist* by this point, but hindsight reveals the group's most cohesive record of the early '70s. Typical of the form are Please Don't Turn Out The Lights and Never Been Alone – both quintessentially yearning Robin vocals – and Barry's dew-dappled devotional address I Can Bring Love. The indisputable highlight arrives at the end: Sweet Song Of Summer is a scorching synergy of synths and quasi-pagan chanting utterly at odds with the image of the cabaret-attired brothers on the sleeve.

7 Various
Saturday Night Fever

RSO 1977, DOWNLOAD £7.99

You Say: "Thirty-five million copies [sic] and counting sold. Where are the 'Disco Sucks' creeps now?" Mike Sowerby, via e-mail

Had Robert Stigwood not rerouted sessions for the Bee Gees' fourteenth album into his film project, the resulting record might have been their best to date. But hell, even the unfinished Bee Gees LP scattered across the soundtrack of John Badham's Saturday Night Fever contains enough genius to justify its place here. How incredible to think that More Than A Woman and How Deep Is Your Love predated the phone call from Stigwood. Then, of course, there's the imperishable Stayin' Alive: essentially Aaron Neville's Hercules turbocharged for the streets of Manhattan, decades of familiarity have done nothing to diminish its brilliance.

6 Bee Gees
Odessa

POLYDOR 1969, 2009 DELUXE EDITION DOWNLOAD £10.29

You Say: "Proof of Barry and Robin's sibling rivalry." Craig Ellis, via e-mail

By 1969, only a gold-embossed, flock-sleeved, four- sided concept album could contain Barry and Robin's expanding egos – even if, in a 2009 interview, Barry couldn't quite recall what the concept was. Glued together with arrangements by the increasingly indispensable Bill Shepherd, maritime epics (Odessa, Never Say Never Again), imaginary national anthems (With All Nations, Seven Seas Symphony), pretty paeans to sad girls (Melody Fair) and one surprisingly effective homage to The Band (Marley Purt Drive) helped bear the weight of *Odessa*'s ambitions. Crowning moment? It's a tie between Robin's Lamplight and Barry's First Of May. When the former was demoted to a B-side for the latter, Robin quit.

5 Robin Gibb
Saved By The Bell

RHINO 2015, DOWNLOAD £13.99

You Say: "You wonder what he'd have done if he'd stayed solo." Stephen Garcia, via e-mail

To an extent, the group identity of the Bee Gees served to camouflage the eccentricities of Robin Gibb. However, in his 18 months as an ex-Bee Gee, those eccentricities defined him. In that time, Robin hymned his solitude into the Top 10 with Saved By The Bell. Proto post-rock liturgies and quasi-ecclesiastical requiems inhabited 1970's *Robin's Reign* LP, while Robin's fascination with military history – the Great War especially – coloured the mood of its successor *Sing Slowly Sisters*. Three years after Robin's death, that mythical lost album emerged on this triple anthology, alongside the other manic labours of his estrangement – among them, his 1969 orchestral fanfare Moon Anthem.

3 Bee Gees
Horizontal

POLYDOR 1968, RHINO EXPANDED EDITION 2007, DOWNLOAD £9.99

You Say: "A must-have, even if it is just for the heavenly Massachusetts" Peter Doubert, via e-mail

Having watched London explode into Technicolor from the other side of the planet, *Horizontal* is the record Bee Gees made as they finally found themselves welcomed into the rarefied heights of that world. Barry's bravura gospel turn on The Change Is Made and maiden chart-topper Massachusetts ratified their status as songwriting heavyweights. Their tireless creativity at this point is evidenced by the mournful chamber-pop of Daytime Girl and the heart-stopping And The Sun Will Shine (the latter written on the spot). Amazingly, the sessions also yielded Words and Sir Geoffrey Saved The World – but they would have to wait until the 2007 reissue to be included here.

2 Bee Gees
Spirits Having Flown

RSO 1979, RHINO REISSUE 2006, DOWNLOAD £7.99

You Say: "Listening to this, it seems impossible that they fell so far so soon after." Henry Lloyd, via e-mail

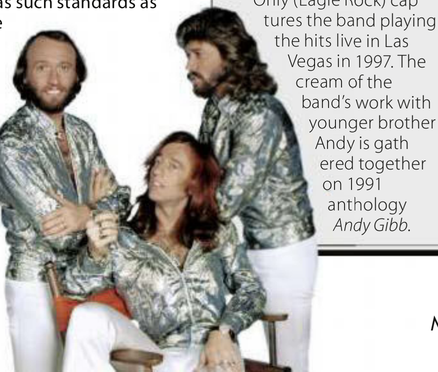
As sessions began for the Bee Gees' first post-*Fever* opus, four songs in the Billboard Top 5 were Gibb compositions. When it came to songwriting, the brothers' newfound invincibility created perfect preconditions for their next batch of songs. Working closely co-producer Albhy Galuten and engineer Karl Richardson, Barry Gibb fashioned a luxuriant sonic vessel for 10 songs that obsess on the transience of perfect love. Love You Inside Out, Too Much Heaven and the staggering title track typify the mood of anxiety. Stuck for a convincing thunderclap sound on Tragedy, Barry merely made one with his mouth. Truly, they could do anything at this point.

1 Bee Gees
Bee Gees' 1st

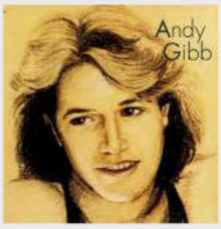
POLYDOR 1967, RHINO EXPANDED REISSUE 2011, DOWNLOAD £7.99

You Say: "Of all their phases, there's something so perfect about this one." Ruth Nathan, via e-mail.

A rainbow fug of Fabness hangs over *Bee Gees' 1st*, but that's by no means the only thing going on. As well as such standards as New York Mining Disaster 1941 and To Love Somebody, other songs suggest turntable miles accrued in the company of The Moody Blues and The Hollies pushing their mellifluous pop into more psychedelic waters. On the lysergic Victoriana of Turn Of The Century, Barry and Robin take it in turns to sing about how amazing it would be to build a time machine. Drop the needle on *Bee Gees' 1st* and you realise that's exactly what they did.



NOW DIG THIS



Other LPs that warrant investigation include 1968's *Idea*, 1970's Robin less *Cucumber Castle* and their 1990s zenith *Size Isn't Everything*. Not least for the Gibbs' recollections in the accompanying book, 1990's *Tales From The Brothers Gibb* box set is an excellent way to delve further into their catalogue (see also Barry's work with Dionne Warwick and Barbra Streisand). The Ultimate Biography Of The Bee Gees: Tales Of The Brothers Gibb (Omnibus, updated edition 2012) tells the story over 781 pages, while the DVD One Night Only (Eagle Rock) captures the band playing the hits live in Las Vegas in 1997. The cream of the band's work with younger brother Andy is gathered together on 1991 anthology *Andy Gibb*.

The boy is back

An affectionate but unsentimental biography of the Thin Lizzy frontman who laughed like Muttley. By James McNair.

Cowboy Song: The Authorised Biography Of Philip Lynott

★★★★

Graeme Thomson

CONSTABLE. £20

"Often the source of pleasure was disarmingly innocent…" writes Graeme Thomson of Lynott and Thin Lizzy at their mid-'70s peak, "the warm glow of satisfaction felt by council-estate kids who suddenly realise they're being paid to sit by a hotel pool in California while the world toils around them." In Cowboy Song, this resonant alternative snapshot of the rampaging act who styled themselves "The fightingist band in rock" is one of countless instances where Thomson really thinks around his subject.

Already rated for his incisive biographies of Kate Bush and George Harrison, the author has written an affectionate and unflinching book on Lynott, his most complex character study to date. That the full-span of Phil's short, eventful life has been diligently researched soon becomes clear: "[Philip] was one of precisely four indigenous black children", the author writes of the demographics of 1950s Dublin, population approximately 600,000.

Naturally, there's plenty on Lynott's music pre-, during and post Thin Lizzy, and fresh quotes from bandmates, friends, acquaintances and enablers shed new light. It's the substantive flesh Thomson puts on the bones of Lynott's personal life, though, that makes Cowboy Song the truest measure of the man we have thus far – and a must-read for anybody ever smitten by Lizzy's fatally-flawed romantic.

The book's coups include an afterword by Caroline Taraskevics, née Crowther, Lynott's long-suffering former wife. When she writes, "He laughed like Muttley", it's a kind and affectionate aside to admirably measured poignancy: "For me his legacy is not just the great catalogue of music he created, but the two beautiful, strong, funny creative and loving girls we made together, of whom he would be so very proud."

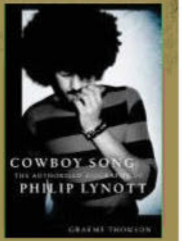
Thomson is good on "the marvellous textural gradations of Lynott's voice"; on his clever 'Celtic branding' of Thin Lizzy, and on the way Phil's best songs put the listener "right at the centre of the action". He's even better, though, on Lynott's weaknesses (hard drugs; pretty women; mercurial-but-unreliable guitarists), and contradictions. Lynott could write something as lyrical and persuasively ardent as Still In Love With You for former partner Gale Barber, yet thought nothing of making ludicrously blatant passes at his friends' girlfriends (Bob Geldof and the late Gary Moore testify).

Another key revelation is that, in August 1968, five days after Lynott's 19th birthday, he and his then girlfriend Carole Stephen had a son, now known as Macdaragh Lambe, who was given up for adoption. Thomson interviews Lambe and his mother, and shows how Lynott's 1973 Thin Lizzy song Little Girl In Bloom hid them both in plain view.

Elsewhere, whether it be the Tintin books he bought for friends' children, his liking for spaghetti "bollock naked" (no sauce), or his autograph-signing regime – "He never scribbled: he always signed 'Philip' very beautifully," says photographer Chalkie Davies – Thomson carefully stockpiles the factoids that make a life. He also writes beautifully about The Boys Are Back In Town, which is, curiously enough, a neat little litmus test of any Lynott/Lizzy biographer worth their salt.

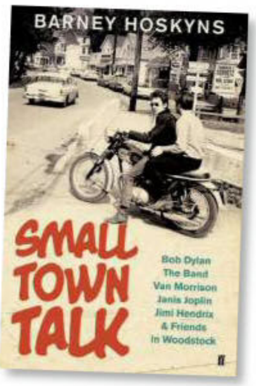
Thin Lizzy's fatally-flawed romantic: Phil Lynott (above right) with Gary Moore and (below, left) marrying Caroline Crowther in February 1980, her father Leslie is on the right.

> "ONE OF PRECISELY FOUR INDIGENOUS BLACK CHILDREN IN 1950s DUBLIN, POPULATION 600,000."



- As a teenager, Lynott was expelled from school for boasting that he was Lady Chatterley's lover.
- Ireland's first rock star didn't like Guinness; his favourite tipple was Smithwick's, an ale brewed in Kilkenny.
- The first 'proper' song Lynott wrote was titled The Death Of A Faun.
- It seems he first used heroin much earlier than previously thought. "Possibly by the late '60s, certainly by the mid '70s," says Thomson.
- In 1981 Lynott paid roadie Charlie McLennan £2,000 to take the rap for a drugs bust.

Alamy, Rex



Small Town Talk

★★★★

Barney Hoskyns

FABER & FABER. £18

Unearthing the real roots of Woodstock.

Libraries groan with nearly as many books about the Woodstock music festival as there were fans who flocked there. But Barney Hoskyns has come up with something novel in Small Town Talk. Instead of focusing on the concert – which actually took place 60 miles from Woodstock – he nails the magic, and mayhem, of the town which inspired the festival's organisers to co-opt its name. Small Town pivots on Bob Dylan, who pied piper'ed a mid-'60s migration of musicians from New York City to the leafy preserve. Dylan was led there by the book's villain, his manager Albert Grossman, who lured other clients like Janis Joplin, The Band and Todd Rundgren. Other scenesters included Van Morrison, Paul Butterfield and Tim Hardin. By capturing their rapport and mind-set, Hoskyns offers a pitch perfect East Coast corollary to his classic tome on the Laurel Canyon scene, Hotel California. Better, he chronicles the seeds of the Americana movement, whose fetish for rural music resonates louder today than ever.

Jim Farber

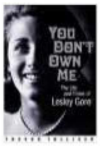
You Don't Own Me: The Life And Times Of Lesley Gore

★★★★

Trevor Tolliver

BACKBEAT. £19

An insightful profile of an ancestral riot grrrl.



A notoriously private person who gave very little away in interviews, Lesley Gore provides any biographer with a difficult challenge. The author, a self-confessed "gushing fanboy", who wears an 'I love Lesley' button badge, does a good job here though. A detailed bibliography at the back of this 209-page book hints at the depth of research; new interviews with Gore's mother Ronny Gore, producer Phil Ramone, Neil Sedaka et al fill in any gaps. What emerges is a portrait of a strong woman who, constrained by the girl group sound, still captured the '60s cultural shift with feminist anthem You Don't Own Me and Martin Luther King elegy I Can't Make It Without You. Later material proved less creatively satisfying for Gore, but identity and emotional release were found from the '90s onwards as the host of PBS TV show In The Life, where she explored LGBT issues.

Lois Wilson

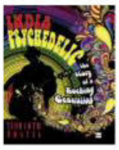
India Psychedelic: The Story Of A Rocking Generation

★★★

Sidharth Bhatia

HARPER COLLINS. £17.99

How the sound of young India spread across the globe.



The story of the rise of rock'n'roll in Britain is that of teenagers discovering that cheap guitars and frothy coffee were the gateway out of a grey world; something similar happened to India's early adopters, who faced far more restrictive social codes and less access to the means of production, consumption and participation yet managed to turn the world Day-Glo. Much is familiar: hip DJs on a foreign radio station, a village of cafes and clubs (Park Street, Calcutta's Soho) and, too often, bands that flared, fizzled and left little trace. Bhatia comprehensively captures the ambience and heartache of bands like What A Fucking Waste Of Time, but his book was written for Indians who know their stuff and a demanding editor could have opened up his tale to help outsiders; more dates, a discography and perhaps family trees would have been useful, too.

David Hutcheon

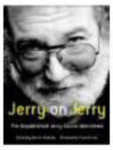
Jerry On Jerry: The Unpublished Jerry Garcia Interviews

★★★★

Edited By Dennis McNally

BLACK DOG & LEVENTHAL. £17

McNally brings us the head of Jerry Garcia.



The Grateful Dead's authorised historian/publicist, Dennis McNally is also chief chronicler of American counterculture. While Deadheads uniformly bedeck themselves in predictable costumery, there's more depth to GD phenomena than tie-dyed dancing bears. Garcia led the band by inspiration rather than edict, with large lobes and huge heart. McNally earned Garcia's respect after the latter read his unsurpassed Kerouac bio and Garcia let his raconteur chops rip in five interviews with McNally (mostly) between 1973 and 1989. For instance, we learn of the guitarist's movie fandom when he details his love for both Abbott And Costello Meet Frankenstein and Alain Resnais' Last Year At Marienbad – one example of his affection for low-to-high-brow aesthetics. Garcia's other passions are similarly diverse: comics to fine art (examples of his work are strewn throughout), the influence of everyone from Elvis's guitarist Scotty Moore to Beat icon Neal Cassady and his hometown San Francisco, precisely for its cultivation of diversity.

Michael Simmons

Sam Phillips: The Man Who Invented Rock'n'Roll

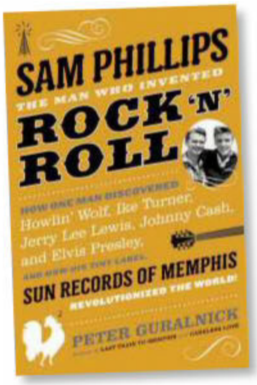
★★★★

Peter Guralnick

WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON UK. £30

Epic story of the founder of Sun Records.

Sam Phillips was, undeniably, a titan of popular music, and through 650 pages, Guralnick maps the Sun King in magisterial detail. Perhaps the book isn't flawless – one aspect of Phillips' genius was his talent as a user of people, especially women, and while Guralnick tackles this carefully towards the end, the narrative would be better served by delving deeper, earlier. Yet perhaps it *is* flawless – for few biographies have anything like this degree of insight, rigour or command of detail; crucially, it also drives you back to the music. Written with sensitivity and love, delving deep into '50s architecture, the hotel business or the mechanics of microphones, it captures more than any other book this writer can remember the '50s' limitless possibilities, and is a gripping depiction of an empire in its pomp – not only Sun Records, but also America.



Paul Trynka

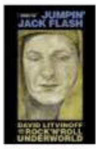
Jumpin' Jack Flash

★★★★★

Keiron Pim

JONATHAN CAPE. £16.99

The short life of David Litvinoff, missing link between The Rolling Stones and the Krays.



David Litvinoff was the great unknowable of '60s London, a self-mythologising operator who helped establish the Krays mythos, worked as "technical advisor" on Nicolas Roeg and Donald Cammell's Performance, and then disappeared into a world of shadows, rumour and dread. Tracking a line from Litvinoff's East End Jewish upbringing, Pim quickly enters a wilderness of mirrors beguiled by this Benzedrine-buzzed, street-hustling enigma as he impersonates Lucien Freud, introduces Chelsea aristos and Soho bohos to East End crims, reorganising London society before a joke about Ronnie Kray earns him a cut-throat razor smile. Edges blurred by acid, amphetamines and fear, Litvinoff's life turns chimerical, strange: he is the 'Clapton is God' graffitist, the Basement Tapes bootlegger, the last man to speak to Brian Jones. High on deep research, Pim follows Litvinoff's dying star from London to Wales to Australia, the narrative growing ever more feral, compelling and sad, before, like Litvinoff's life, it ends all too soon.

Andrew Male

Crazy in Calcutta: when India went Day-Glo.

Pearl before swines

Heartbreaking window into the tragic life of blues rock legend. By Lois Wilson.

Janis: Little Girl Blue

★★★★

Dir: Amy Berg

DOGWOOF. C/DVD

"Jesus fucking Christ, I want to be happy so fucking bad," a lonely Janis Joplin wrote to Peter de Blanc, her then-boyfriend, on returning from San Francisco to her home town of Port Arthur, Texas, to get clean in 1965.

While she did quit drugs that time, Amy Berg's exceptional film portrays her as rarely being happy during 27 years of a life which ended on October 4, 1970, from a heroin overdose.

An outsider, growing up in a narrow-minded town, Janis craved social acceptance and yet refused to conform and was bullied for her unconventional looks and liberal politics. As a student in Austin, Texas, music provided her a safe haven, initially as a singer of folk and blues in the Waller Creek Boys in 1962 – "instantly Janis became one of the boys," says Powell St John, the group's leader – but it didn't last. Intimidated by her peers, she was devastated when the fraternities voted her Austin's "Ugliest Man". "It crushed her, the saddest thing I ever saw," St John remembers in tears.

Even when she found approval fronting Big Brother And The Holding Company, she was in constant turmoil. "I apologise for being so plain bad in the family, I'm just sorry," she writes to her parents for returning to San Francisco and fuelling their fear of her becoming an addict again once there.

It's this intimate correspondence, narrated off screen by Chan Marsall (aka Cat Power) and interwoven with both new and archive interviews – with school friends, family, band members et al – and astonishing concert footage, that gives Berg's film invaluable insights into her conflicted mind. Sometimes her fragility, self-doubt and desperate need for recognition are too much to bear – "I'm awfully sorry to be such a disappointment to you but I really do think there is an awfully good chance I won't blow it this time… you couldn't possibly want for me to be a winner more than I do," she wrote to her parents just before she died.

There were good times though – seeing Otis Redding ("my man") at the Fillmore on LSD; a sensational performance of Ball And Chain at Monterey Pop ("I was astonished by everything I saw," says Columbia Records MD Clive Davis); receiving a gold disc for *Cheap Thrills*.

Even after leaving Big Brother, when the pressure heaped on even more as a solo artist, there was still much for Janis to thrill to: stage invasions in Frankfurt; mobbings in Stockholm and kids dancing in the aisles at the Royal Albert Hall – "God, I'm so happy," she gushed as she left the stage.

But once off-stage those inner demons were sadly too fierce to fight.

That this is only the second documentary to be made about Janis – the first being 1974's Howard Alk-directed Janis – is astonishing, given her huge musical importance. That it does such a tremendous job at capturing her flawed but beautiful personality is cause for celebration.

I must make amends: (main) Janis in pensive mood in Denmark, 1969; (insets, centre) at the New Year's Wail, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, 1967; (bottom) posing with her psychedelic Porsche.

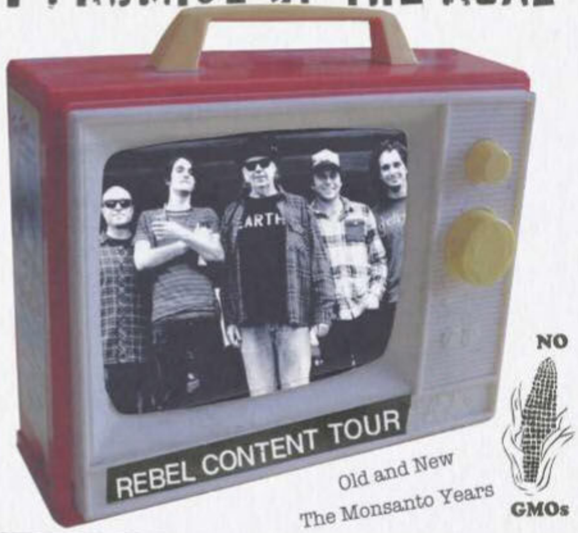
Getty Images

"HER FRAGILITY, SELF-DOUBT, NEED FOR RECOGNITION ARE TOO MUCH TO BEAR."

WHAT WE'VE LEARNT

- Janis's father Seth Joplin was an engineer at a Texaco plant in Port Arthur. Both he and Dorothy East, his wife and Janis's mother, wanted their daughter to become a school teacher.
- After Janis borrowed an Odetta album from high school friend J Dave Moriarty, she shocked everyone by giving "a perfect imitation… we were all stunned," says Moriarty.
- When baritone saxophonist Cornelius 'Snooky' Flowers turned up to meet Janis for the first time on joining her group, the Kozmic Blues Band, Janis opened the door to him in her knickers and bra. "She started singing and I said, Damn, are you sure she's white?"

NEIL YOUNG
+PROMISE OF THE REAL



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Hot to trot

Patti Smith continues touring *Horses*, the album with no expiry date. By Chris Nelson.

Patti Smith

Moore Theatre, Seattle

Word that Patti Smith would mount a complete-album tour of *Horses* for its 40th anniversary could well have been met with indifference. Playing a classic album start-to-finish has lost the gimmicky sheen it had when the trend began in earnest a decade ago. But *Horses* is a distinct species. Smith embraces the album's influence on fans and other artists. She played it straight through for its 30th anniversary, and released a live version in a deluxe edition of the album. *Horses* straight through is more pride than ploy.

At the Moore, Smith opens with Compacted Awareness, a poem from *Horses*' sleevenotes. The room isn't just quiet. It's silent. Then Smith reaches the line, "I am truly totally ready to go," and the crowd is poised to explode into Gloria. Smith deliberately eases them in, her fondness for the phrasing of Dylan and Sinatra on full display. She stretches "thieves" into "theeeeeeeves," suggesting an entire gang; her "k" at the end of "thick" is stiletto sharp. She's performing, not just singing, miming the song's grind against the parking meter, dancing with guitarist Lenny Kaye, playing fervently to the front rows. Smith is 69 years old, and every bit a rock'n'roller.

With Redondo Beach, she's clearly having fun – which is just a bit discordant, given that the song ends in suicide by drowning. Really, though, it's not hard to fathom the glee. Smith may regularly share microphones with Bono and Springsteen, but her concert demeanour has always reflected an unabashed thrill. She seems utterly grateful to be here, and she commits her bliss to her audiences.

Tonight, it's not only bliss. It is fortitude. It is inspiration.

In 1975, *Horses* – with all its confusion, pain, longing sensuality, acceptance – reached into bedrooms and told outcasts of all kinds, "Hey, you're not alone." In 2016, in Seattle, the album and Smith's performance of it shouts to entire communities, "Hey, we're not alone." Whatever is fouling our world – terrorists, presidential candidates, police killings, income inequality – we can defeat it, together. *Horses*' reputation 40 years on is evidence that we indeed have the power to wrestle the earth from fools.

The clarion blows loudest on Land. Nearly convulsing, Smith wrings *Horses*' surreal sexual adventure into an exhortation. Johnny's no longer lying bloody in bed, but wandering through an apocalypse that looks like now, wondering what's the matter with the world. Smith, grey hair hanging like a veil over her face, shouts, "All is the matter! Everything matters! Black lives matter! Black lives matter! Your lives matter!"

"I could hear the angel calling": Patti Smith (right) brings *Horses* to Seattle; (bottom row, from right) Patti flanked by Lenny Kaye (right) and Tony Shanahan; calling for more at the Moore; Smith delivers Compacted Awareness; and puts best foot forward.

"TONIGHT IT'S NOT ONLY BLISS. IT IS FORTITUDE. IT IS INSPIRATION."

Smith could close the show now and send fans home both spent and sparked. But following *Horses*, there is other business to attend to.

It's Michael Stipe's birthday, and Smith asks the room to sing to him by speakerphone. That leads to an attempt at R.E.M.'s Everybody Hurts. Smith is a champion at imparting grief, but the performance is undercut when she can't find her way into the second verse, which forces a hand-off to bassist and keyboard player, Tony Shanahan.

After a comment about Smith's age, the band takes up Jimi Hendrix's If 6 Was 9. Smith protests actually playing it, then acquiesces and persists through the one verse she remembers. And so it goes. Dancing Barefoot and People Have The Power follow, but it's hard to regain momentum, and the second half of the show teeters between haphazard and a shambles.

But Smith is not one to let a concert dissolve. In the early 2000s, this is the part of the show when her maternal instincts kicked in. She would urge fans to drink more water and to brush their teeth. These are different times.

"People!" she shouts. "This year is going to be a fucking hard year! A dirty fucking year!" She presses the audience to transform the world around them. Hatred and guns will be defeated by love, kindness, intelligence (and health!). Calls to action have long been pillars in Smith concerts, but the revolutionary stance feels particularly appropriate for a *Horses* show.

Patti Smith is no Rosa Parks. Yet it's not a stretch to say that *Horses* had some role in creating a United States where marriage equality is the law of the land and Transparent – a comedy-drama featuring a transgender character – is the most heralded show on American TV.

The band closes out with My Generation, the B-side to the Gloria single 40 years ago. Smith enthusiastically inverts the refrain: "Hope I live 'til I get old!"

"And I am fucking old!" she adds.

Then finally: "And I'm gonna get older!"

Defiant, to the last.

Nate Watters (5)

SETLIST

Compacted Awareness / Gloria / Redondo Beach / Birdland / Free Money / Kimberly / Break It Up / Land / Elegie / Privilege (Set Me Free) / Medley: Rock & Roll / I'm Waiting For The Man / White Light/White Heat / Beneath The Southern Cross / Happy Birthday / Everybody Hurts / If 6 Was 9 / Dancing Barefoot / People Have The Power / My Generation

Feet first

Edmonton's Jacques Brel demonstrates his Mercury Prize-winning form to a spellbound home crowd. By Tom Doyle.

Benjamin Clementine

St John-at-Hackney Church, London

Under the rough, cracked plasterwork of a repaired church ceiling destroyed by fire 60 years ago, Benjamin Clementine is sitting barefoot at the piano, talking about receiving messages from angels.

"They sing to me," he says, midway through the stirring Adios, "and I can recall their melodies…it goes something like this." He then launches into a soaring falsetto approximation of these celestial voices in his head.

It's a typically eccentric moment in the most high-profile London show yet for this characteristically oblique individual. If Clementine's boho hobo backstory seems a little too neat – running away to Paris from an oppressive upbringing in Edmonton to sleep rough and busk – then his self-mythology and stage act are not without humour. Starting Adios by standing alongside drummer Alexis Bossard with their backs to the 1,400-strong audience as cellist Barbara Le Liepvre performs a dramatic intro, he admonishes audience whisperers with a determined "Sssh!" and laughter rises into the air.

One song earlier, amid the rolling thunder of Erik Satie-quoting newie Bendy Buses, he declared, "So I sing what I say and I say what I feel… you could call it idiosyncrasy." It's effectively a mission statement and one that translates to his physicality, as he hunches round-shouldered on a too-high stool at his keyboard, bare-chested beneath a blue-grey tailored overcoat, his passion meter set to max. There is vulnerability evident too. As the assembled spontaneously sing Happy Birthday to him tonight on the occasion of his 27th, he seems genuinely thrown by the gesture. "I just got blown away by you," he announces, a once-bullied child clearly overwhelmed by the massed show of affection.

If many may have been drawn here through curiosity following his Mercury Prize win for *At Least For Now*, incredibly, for the normally distracted and chattering gig-goers of London, they are virtually hushed throughout. But then it's hard not to be compelled, particularly in this setting, by the spirituality of Condolence's observation, "Out of absolutely nothing, you and I were born." As the show progresses, there are a lot of kissing couples around, highlighting that there is something shamelessly romantic about this music, particularly in uncertain times.

Although peculiarities abound, there are almost hit-like crowd-pleasers here: the spiralling arpeggios and howl of loneliness in Cornerstone; the head-nodding groove and swoop into the heart-stopping, destiny-calling chorus of London. Early reference points to his sound – the thrillingly unpredictable soul of Nina Simone, the curious croon of Antony Hegarty – are becoming increasingly redundant. Clementine is simply a one-off.

Before the closing and lovely piano transposing of Nick Drake's River Man, he encores with two other new songs – the frenetic jazz mantras of Kettle and the keening vocal and twisty flow of Balloon d'Or – melted together into one long passage. It's a brave move. But then, it's clear that bravery is what Benjamin Clementine is all about.

Simply a one-off: Benjamin Clementine (above) with a message from the angels, St John-at-Hackney; (below) Barbara Le Liepvre.

> "THERE IS SOMETHING SHAMELESSLY ROMANTIC ABOUT THIS MUSIC IN UNCERTAIN TIMES."

Simon Fernandez (2)

SETLIST
Gone / Condolence / Bendy Buses / Adios / Nemesis / The People And I / Cornerstone / Edmonton / London / Kettle / Balloon d'Or / River Man

ERIC CLAPTON
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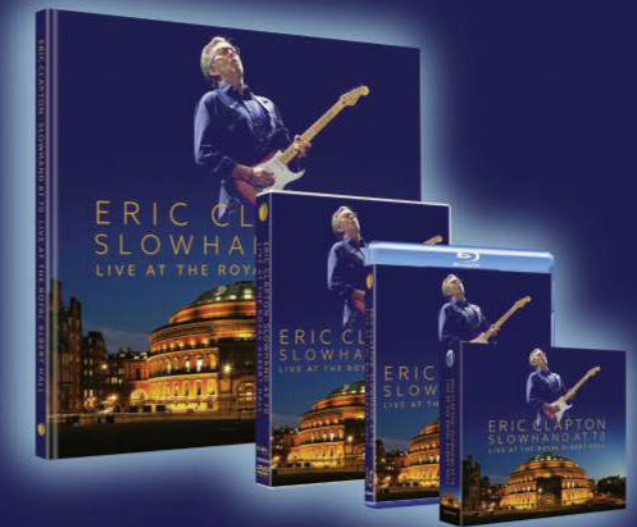

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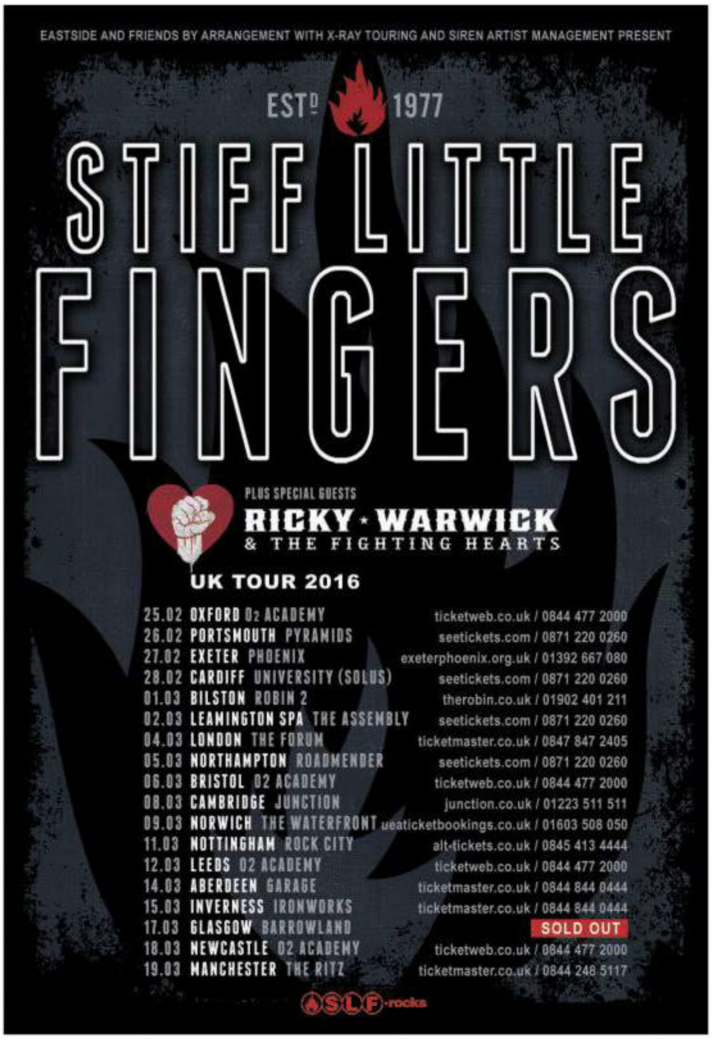

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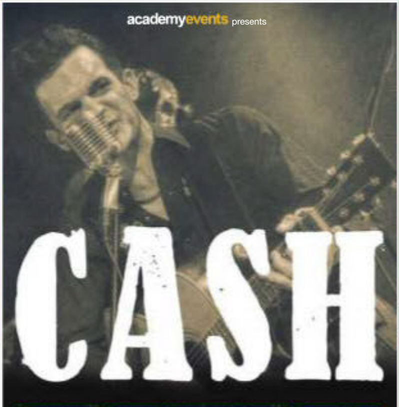

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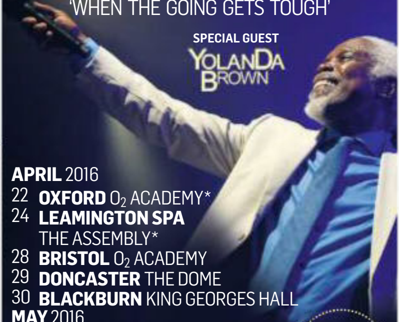

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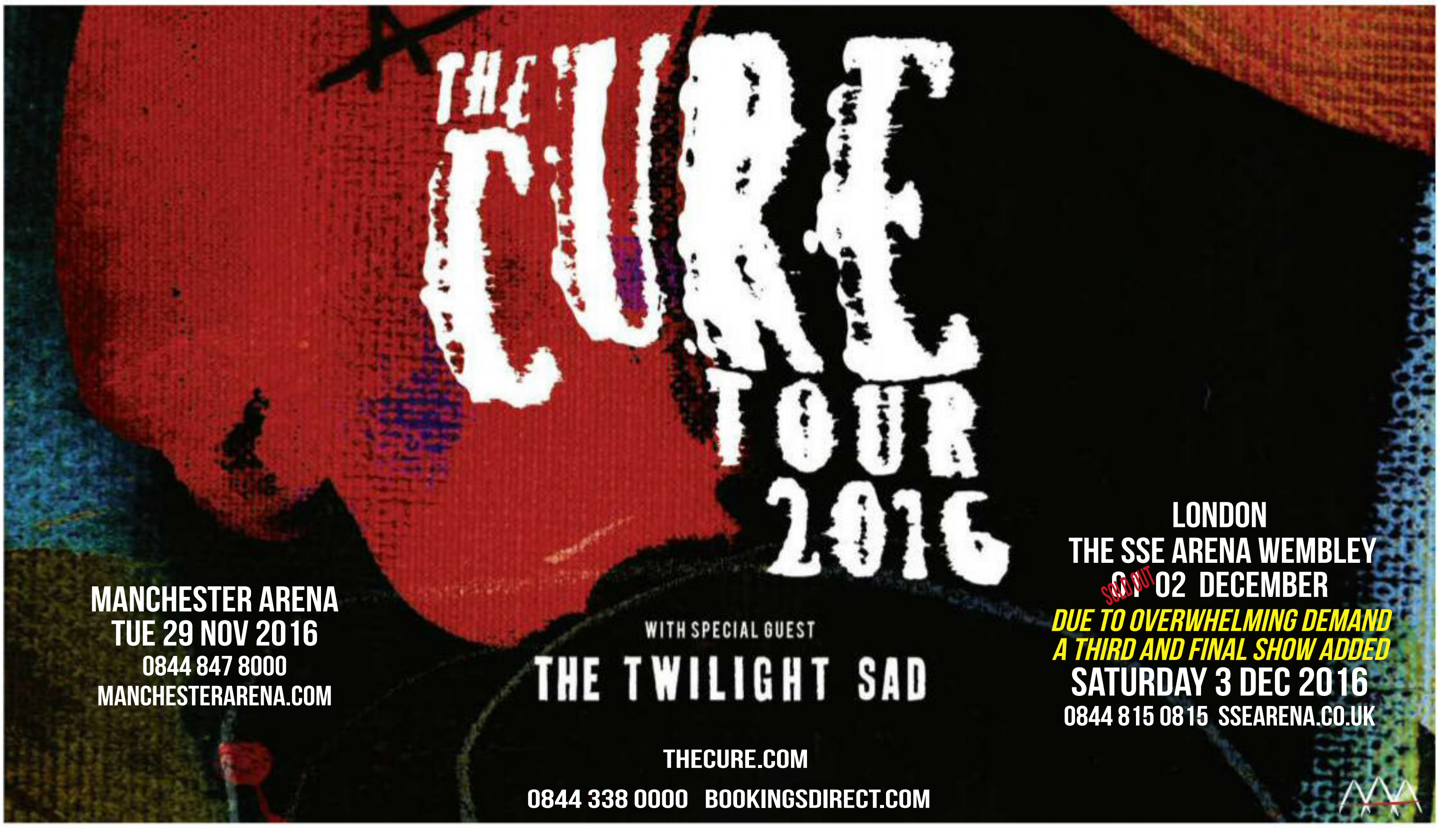

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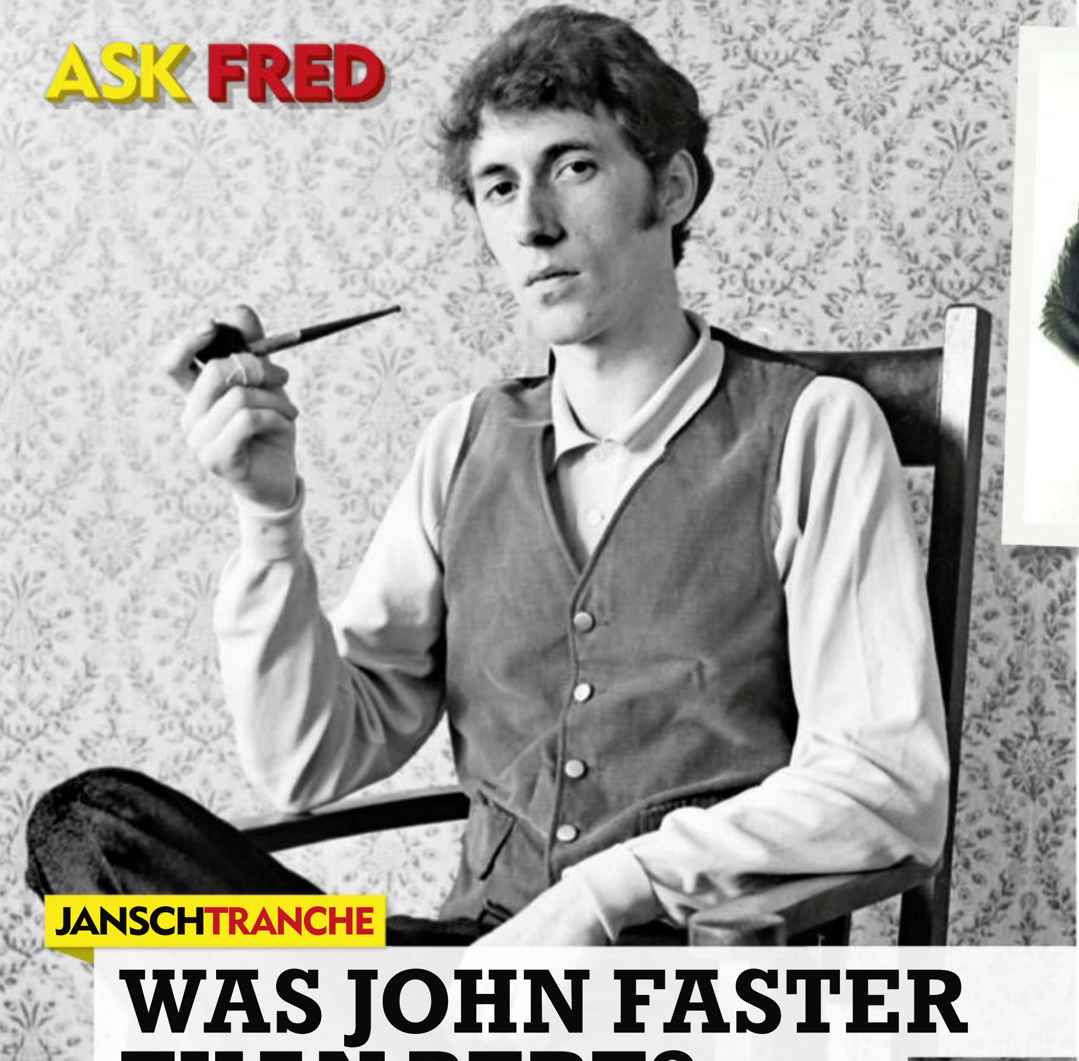

JANSCHTRANCHE

WAS JOHN FASTER THAN BERT?

Abhor prosaic highways? Then tuck into Sidney Poitier, Video Stars and Yardbirds.

I know John Martyn's debut LP, *London Conversation*, was recorded in a single day at a cost of just £158. But wasn't Bert Jansch's first album made even faster?

Bill Rosen, via e-mail

Fred says: I once talked to Jansch about his early albums and he explained: "The first one [*Bert Jansch*, Transatlantic, 1965] took a year to make. It was done in Bill Leader's back-room on a Revox. Every month or two I'd go around to Bill's house and lay down a song. But the next one [*It Don't Bother Me*, Transatlantic, 1965] took exactly three hours to make. I figured that the faster I put the tracks down, the faster I got out. I just ordered like a dozen bottles of wine, put the microphone in front of me and off we went for three hours."

Incidentally, Jimmy Page said of that debut release: "I was absolutely obsessed with Bert Jansch. When I first heard that album couldn't believe it. It was so far ahead of what everyone else was doing. No one in America could touch that."

DID SIDNEY SING?

Has Sidney Poitier ever made a record?

Angela Morton, via e-mail

Fred says: The answer is no. Though Poitier appeared to sing in the film version of Porgy And Bess, the voice heard was that of Robert McFerrin, father of Don't Worry, Be Happy hit-maker Bobby McFerrin. McFerrin senior was a baritone with the New York Metropolitan Opera.

TRAFFIC PROBLEM

My mate and I were both massive Traffic fans and many years ago he gave me a tape that included a version of Paper Sun, the band's first single. But the version on the tape is vastly different to the hit single. The main sitar track is missing, replaced by heavy bass and sax. The "paper sun" chorus is also more psychedelic in sound and quite wonderful. I've tried to find out more details of this version but without luck. Unfortunately, my friend passed away shortly after he gave me the tape so I was never able to find out where he got it from. Can you provide any information on this version? It is obviously a studio recording.

Martin New, Queensland, Australia

Fred says: I passed this one on to Neil Storey, creator of a 12 volume Island Records history, who reckons: "Either the wrong 45 mix was sent to Australia and few got pressed up or, more likely, a different mix appeared on the Australian version of *Mr Fantasy*, issued by Festival in 1968. It's possible that some tape op at Olympic incorrectly ran out the non-UK 45 mix as the album mix. Certainly the Aussie album, unlike its UK counterpart, included Paper Sun. I've never heard the Australian pressing, which was released with a different sleeve, so I can't say with certainty if that's the root of the problem, but it sounds as though MOJO reader New has something that's very rare indeed."

Pipe-smoking rocks: (clockwise from main) Bert Jansch relaxes; Buggles (Trevor Horn, right); Paul Anka gets the point; Traffic; Sidney Poitier with Dorothy Dandridge in Porgy And Bess.

BUGGLE PLUS GOOD

Geoff Downes played Buggles songs with The Trevor Horn Band last March. What are the chances of them playing as Buggles again? I missed them in 2010 and 2011 and would love to see them play *The Age Of Plastic* in full.

Keith Duffy, via e-mail

Fred says: Master producer Horn has commented: "I don't mind doing it but only as part of another more far-reaching show, because the Buggles material is very early, frozen in time, Euro techno-pop. There's a lot more stuff to play." So, fingers crossed!

GOIN' TO A LOGO?

Re the earliest name logo on record sleeves query (MOJO 265). The Yardbirds logo of 1964 predates that used by Love. They used the same logo on five of seven early sleeves: *Five Live Yardbirds* (1964), *Having A Rave Up With The Yardbirds* (1965), *Sonny Boy Williamson And The Yardbirds* (1966), *Little Games* (1967) and *Yardbirds Greatest Hits* (1967).

Bob Walker, via e-mail

Fred says: Any further takers on this subject or can we now shut up shop?

STILL BEHIND THAT CURTAIN

Re: Iron Curtain rock (MOJO 262) I was born and raised in Los Angeles, where I still live. I went to Europe for the first time after my sophomore year at Berkeley, in summer 1966, and had the itch to see what it was like behind the Iron Curtain, so I got visas for Czechoslovakia and Hungary. When we hit Prague we met a group of students who took us one night to a nightclub/disco in the basement of one of the bigger pre-war hotels, the Alcron I believe. Staying at the hotel was Paul Anka, on a tour of the East bloc. His band came down to the disco and jammed impromptu. I embarrassed myself by accompanying them on When The Saints Go Marching In with my best (pretty lame) Louis Armstrong voice. Not exactly rock'n' roll, but memorable nonetheless.

Bob Bookman, via e-mail

Fred says: I'll mention reader Vladimir Matetsky, who e-mailed from Russia to say he remembers Boney M and The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band playing in Moscow, then curtail the curtain discussion. My thanks to all Eastern European readers who took part!

CONTACTFRED

Write to: Ask Fred, MOJO, Endeavour House, 189 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8JG.

OR e-mail Fred Dellar direct at fred.dellar@bauermedia.co.uk

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The closing date is **March 2**. For the rules of the quiz, send an SAE to that same address.

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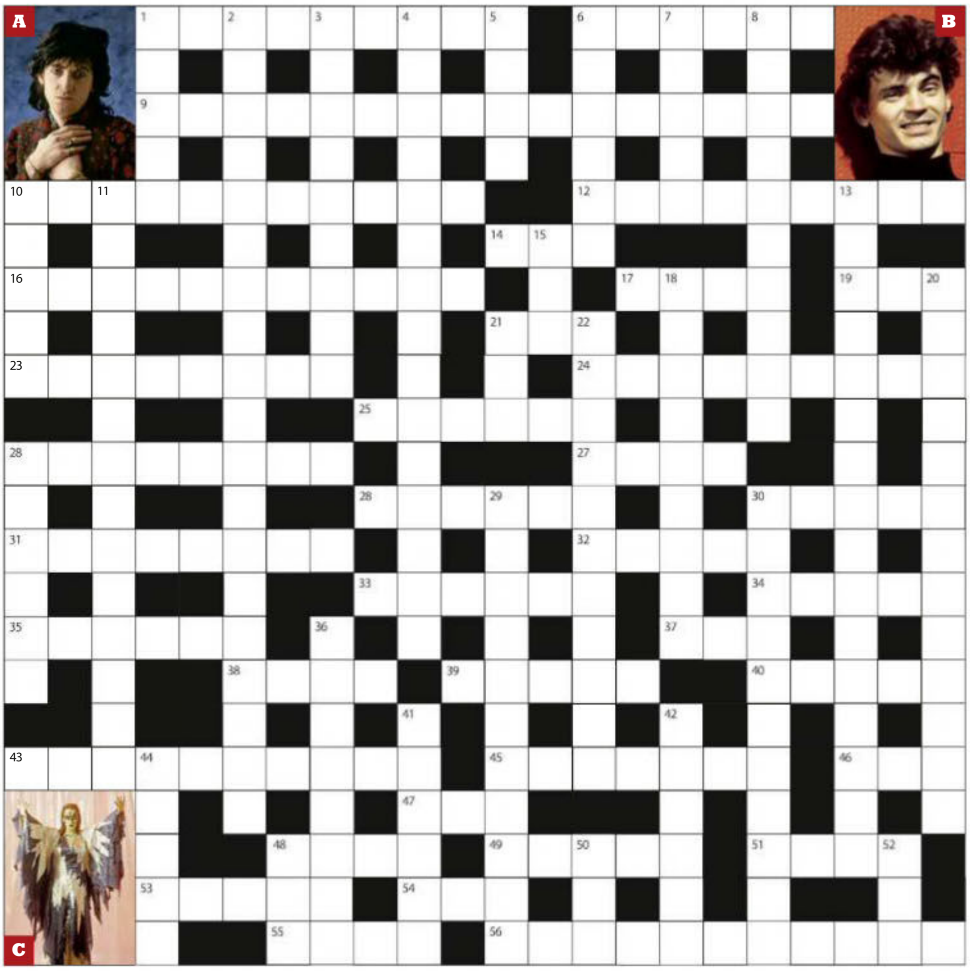
ANSWERS

MOJO 266

Across: 1 Buddy Holly, 9 One Dove, 10 Being A Girl, 11 Paralysed, 13 The Strypes, 15 Earle, 16 Nucleus, 17 Nightwatch, 18 Is King, 20 Very, 21 Oar, 22 Elmer, 24 Beady Eye, 26 Eden, 29 Al Green, 30 Elf, 31 No Future, 33 Syro, 34 Z.T.T., 35 Two, 37 Nico, 39 Thriller, 40 Vinyl, 43 O.M.D., 44 Not A Job, 45 Groovy, 48 Earache, 49 Liar, 50 M-Beat, 51 Slint, 52 Weirdos, 54 Sidewinder, 57 Old, 59 Animals, 60 Trumpet, 61 Arista, 62 Hag, 63 Eva.

Down: 1 Bob Marley, 2 Do It Yourself, 3 Heard Em Say, 4 Leiber, 5 Yo La Tengo, 6 Jersey Girl, 7 Go With The Flow, 8 Jerry Dammers, 12 A Tune A Day, 14 Soho, 19 In Your Room, 23 R Kelly, 25 Don't, 27 Neon Rainbow, 28 Our Love, 32 Ott, 33 Saints, 34 Zombies, 35 True, 36 Over Rising, 38 Cool, 41 Nick Drake, 42 Lee, 45 Grid, 46 Obvious, 47 Yard, 52 Wrath, 53 Sasha, 55 Iris, 56 Etta, 58 Dar.

Winners: Eamon McClorey, **Martin Moore**, **James Fraser** and **Bernie Winston** each win TIBO Plus Bluetooth speakers.



ACROSS

1 Rock'n'roll metal detectorist (4,5)
6 Annie Lennox album for the snake, rattle and rollers perhaps? (6)
9 A Style Council album – was it dedicated to Tesco? (3,9,4)
10 See photoclue A (5,6)
12 Coloured like a Nick Drake compilation album (3,2,4)
14 Their debut LP was *Monster Movie* (3)
16 The B-52's hit crustacean (4,7)
17 Gen X Billy (4)
19 Of which Bowie's machine was constructed (3)
21 She commences My Aim Is True (3)
23 OMD's Super Fortress success (5,3)
24 See photoclue B (3,6)
25 See photoclue C (6)
26 "All those dirty words, they make us look so dumb" (2,3,3)
27 Not *really* so silent record label founded by Daniel Miller (4)
28 Kind of energy once produced by Blondie (6)
30 Were America somewhere else at the time this album was made? (5)
31 Five Stairsteps' classic covered by Nina Simone and Beth Orton (3,5)
32 The Who were famously live there (5)
33 Vampire Weekend album that contains California English (6)
34 Depeche Mode album that sounds pretty radical (5)
35 Joni Mitchell's near-Arabic journey (6)
37 Label on which Elton John notched his first hits (1.1.1)
38 Area, needless to say, sung about by Al Stewart (4)
39 Direction for The Charlatans' country boy (5)
40 That ----- A Lot. P.J. Proby hit penned by Lennon & McCartney (5)
43 Formerly Cat Stevens (5,5)
45 Pat whose real surname is Andrzejewski (7)
46 Freeez success located amid Sid Vicious (1.1.1)
47 He's coming proclaimed Three Dog Night (3)
48 Indian music form (4)
49 Mr Big's Shakespearean lover (5)
51 Valente, also known as Chet Powers (4)
53 Eric B's partner in hip hop (5)
54 The kind of songs The National had for dirty lovers (3)
55 Walker, Barlow, Usher etc. (4)
56 Paul Weller album named after a Woking location (7,4)

DOWN

1 She sang The Dull Flame Of Desire with Antony Hegarty (5)
2 King Crimson's strange delicacy (5,7,2,5)
3 Ray Charles' hard of hearing hit (5,1,3)
4 Mica Paris's lone enticement (2,3,10)
5 Laura hidden amid Sonny Rollins (4)
6 The kind of Rod Stewart song that linked him with The Temptations (6)
7 In short – Mary Isobel Catherine Bernadette O'Brien (5)
8 Dylan album that featured the track Lenny Bruce (4,2,4)
10 Night ---- (Gregory Isaacs) (5)
11 MC5's debut advice (4,3,3,4)
13 Kanye West's last minute signing (4,12)
15 Winehouse or possibly Studt (3)
18 Eric Stewart album title inspired by a mailed package (2,3,4)
20 I Am The Black Gold Of The Sun, they proclaimed (9,4)
21 Fleetwood --- (3)
22 U2 member who was born in Oxfordshire (4,7)
26 Not remotely forward – like Kajagoogoo (3,3)
29 Their album took its name from TMW Turner's Rain, Steam and Speed (6,5)
30 On which jazz took place for a 1960 concert movie (1,7,3)
36 You Might Need Somebody she declared in 1997 (5,3)
41 Not a particularly difficult one for Keith Carradine (2,4)
42 Spanish ---- (Mink DeVille) (6)
44 Dance that's "not hard to learn" according to Usher (1-4)
48 Rip --- and Panic (3)
50 Initially Music Corporation of America (1.1.1)
52 Rita hidden by Norah Jones (3)

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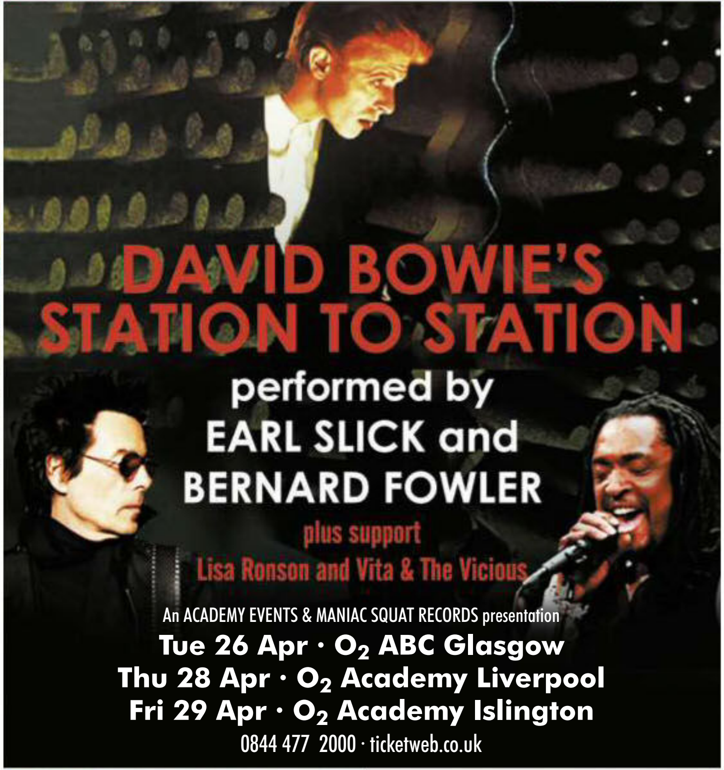

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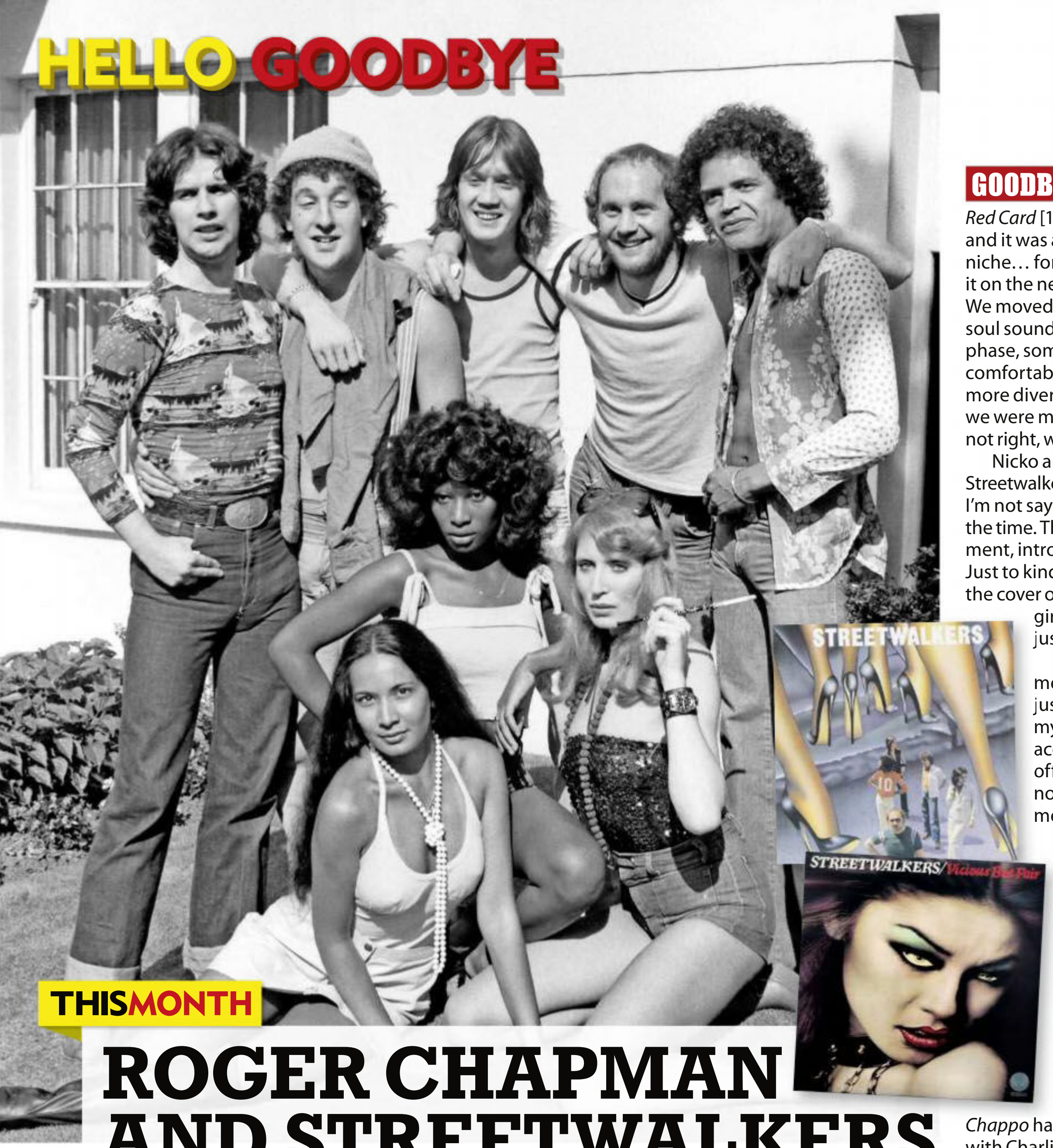


THISMONTH

ROGER CHAPMAN AND STREETWALKERS

They didn't start as a band at all, but enjoyed a few good years before diversification and friction spelt the end.

HELLO AUTUMN 1973

At the end of Family I'd had enough of being in a group, slogging up and down the M1, doing things day by day. But me and Charlie [Whitney, Family guitarist], we were still writing, and I wonder if we didn't start recording the Chapman- Whitney album [*Streetwalkers*, 1974] before the end of Family.

Chapman-Whitney was a bit more plotted up than Family. [Manager] Harvey [Goldsmith] took us over, which I suppose gave us a lot of confidence. At first it wasn't a band at all, it was myself and Charlie, but when we'd made the album *Streetwalkers*, there was a proposal, form a band to promote it. That was just the guys who were on the album, various session players and a few friends, which was how we met [guitarist/vocalist] Bobby Tench. We did quite a successful live gig in town, and the questions came: do you fancy keeping the band together? We made it permanent with Bob, Jon [Plotel, bass] and Nicko [McBrain] on drums. I think we did a couple of nights at the Marquee and got fabulous reviews. We all went, "We're a proper band!" We had a great front line, then John and Nicko in the rhythm section… it was a really good rock band. Naming the band Streetwalkers was just a natural progression.

Open and smut case: Streetwalkers in their prime (top row, from left) Charlie Whitney, Jon Plotel, Nicko McBrain, Roger Chapman and Bobby Tench, (front) unnamed friends; (inset right) *Downtown Flyers* and *Vicious But Fair* sleeves with model Anna Chen.

"I GOT MY MONEY OUT OF THE BANK ACCOUNT AND TOLD 'EM TO FUCK OFF."

In 1975 we did the *Downtown Flyers* album. The women's legs and stilettos on the cover, we weren't like that at all. *Streetwalkers* was named because each song was about a different character in the street. It had nothing to do with sex or women on the game – there was maybe a song whose lyrics bent a little but that way, but again, it was just another person in the street. Maybe Genesis had got bigger or something, but they'd decided to get another chap to take over the management, and I assume it was some cheap management decision that it'd be really good to make all women whores.

We had a couple of good years. I think we wanted something successful but we never quite wanted to own up to it, a very odd thing.

GOODBYE LATE 1977

Red Card [1976] was a good record, and it was almost like we'd found our niche… for a short time. Then we lost it on the next album [*Vicious But Fair*]. We moved away from the heavy rock soul sound, and drifted into a softer phase, something I wasn't really comfortable with. Charlie was a lot more diversified musically. Even when we were making it I said, "Charlie this is not right, we're losing the plot, again."

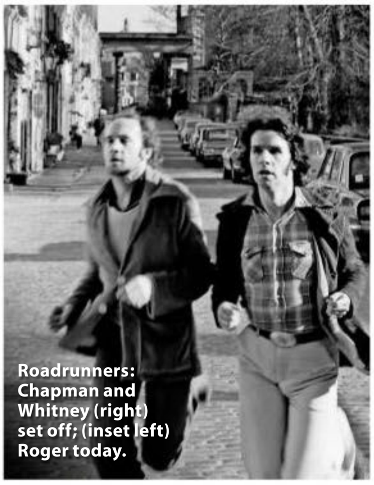
Nicko and John weren't part of Streetwalkers then. There were frictions, I'm not saying we were all best pals all the time. Then there was the management, introducing his dodgy ideas. Just to kind of cap it, the woman on the cover of the album was the girlfriend of the manager. We just thought, "This is shit".

I don't remember a last meeting or a farewell gig, we just really slunk away. I got all my money out of the bank account and told 'em to fuck off, really, knock this nonsense on the head. People mention the punk thing coming in, but we were pretty fucking lairy ourselves and it probably wouldn't have continued anyway, ha ha! There were always gonna be some loggerheads, it was never fucking easy. It was the same with Family. At some point you realise, I want to do something else – and Family were successful!

My [1979 solo] album *Chappo* has a leftover song written with Charlie, Pills. We wrote some nice songs together, but I have no idea what he got up to afterwards and I've never worked with him again. Bob I've worked with, we're still really good pals. But it was a clean break. And my solo thing was something I'd been yearning for. I didn't want to rule the world but I wanted to be master of my own destiny. Which happened, thankfully.

Ian Harrison

The 15-CD box set I'm Walking, Complete Streetwalkers 1974-1977 is out on Madfish.



Roadrunners: Chapman and Whitney (right) set off; (inset left) Roger today.

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